

ANIMALS & MEN



THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



EXPEDITION REPORT:
The hunt for the British "Bigfoot"
The Cleveland Wallaby Slasher;
The Alien Big Cat Study Group;
News, Reviews and More...

Issue 29

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Animals & Men #29

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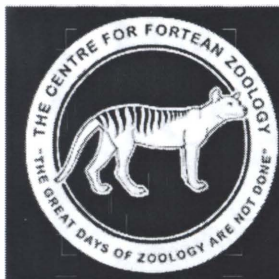
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EDITORIAL

jonathan downes



Dear Friends,

Let me first apologise for the lateness of this issue. It was meant to come out in January but as you will read we went to Bolam Lake on a beast hunt and production was put back a couple of weeks. Then there have been no end of technical problems, but everything seems to be under control now. The yearbooks have also been affected by the technical problems but all things being equal we intend for them to be out very soon.

Now for the good news! Richard and I are speaking at the Unconvention this year about three of the more astounding adventures of the CFZ over the past twelve months. We shall also be putting together an exhibition bigger and better than last year's, and all in all to quote the playbills for Pablo Fanque's Fair: A splendid time is guaranteed for all.

After months of indecision we have decided that there WILL be a Weird Weekend this year. It will probably be in September and we will be making announcements about the date, venue (probably the Cowick Barton), and a full list of speakers very soon.

We are in the early stages of putting together plans for relocating the CFZ to a rural location where we can have a permanent visitors centre and library. We are presently talking to various agencies about grant monies and with luck, a substantial full time exhibition may eventually result.

We have a number of expeditions in the planning stages, and we are looking for volunteers to join us both at home and abroad. If you are interested please get in touch. Over the past few years the emphasis of the CFZ has changed from being a magazine based project to a far greater emphasis on fieldwork. We are looking for people who want to become involved - all over the world - on a range of exciting projects. We are now the biggest and fastest growing cryptozoological organisation in the world and intend to stay that way.

Until next time,
Slainte mhor

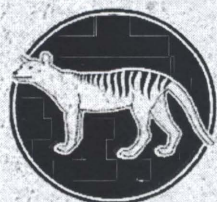
Jonathan Downes (Director)

*The great days of zoology
are not done.....*

THE FACULTY OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



2003



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edited and compiled by jon and richard

NEW AND
REDISCOVERED



THE BATS AIN'T
LEFT THE BELFRY

10 years ago, just after the formation of the Centre for Fortean Zoology, scientists sadly announced the first British mammal extinction since the wolf. Now, according to BBC News, on Wednesday, 18 December 2002, reports of the extinction of the greater mouse-eared bat, like the oft-quoted report of the death of Mark Twain, appear to have been premature. A young male specimen was found hibernating in Sussex, on 14 December during a periodic winter check of known hibernation sites. Hopes are rising that the species may have managed to survive in the UK. An elderly female was found in January 2001, not far from where the latest discovery was made, but she died within a few days. The species as a whole has declined sharply across its northwest European range over the last 30 years. (See Box)

David King of the Sussex Bat Group told the BBC: *"Our members recognised this one straight away, and ringed it, so if we find one next summer we'll know whether it's the same bat or a different one. [...] We have quite strong hopes now that the greater mouse-eared bat is not extinct here after all."*

This bat was common in Europe until about 1950. In the late 1940s there used to be very large colonies of Mouse-eared Bats in the Netherlands, but by 1970 the species had virtually become extinct.

During the 1950s and 1960s a colony of 3,000 in a Polish church disappeared, as well as other colonies in the Ardennes of Belgium and Luxembourg.

By 1991 the Greater Mouse-eared Bat had been nearly exterminated in the Low Countries and Israel.

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OOK!

Good news for the endangered Bornean Orang Utan with the discovery of a population of up to 2,500 specimens hiding deep in the forests of Borneo. It is believed that these rare apes are living out of sight in a remote lowland region of East Kalimantan. If this discovery is confirmed, it will raise the number of known orang-utans in the world by about 10%. This astounding discovery is a great boost to hopes that the species may be saved from extinction in the wild. The claim, has been made by researchers from the US-based conservation group Nature Conservancy, and is based on signs of nests made by the apes.

These apes are almost completely arboreal and hardly ever descend to the surface of the forest floor. Each nest, which is constructed from twisted plants and foliage, will be inhabited by a solitary male, or by a female and young. However, Richard Freeman from the CFZ would like to point out that orang utans do not sleep in the same nest over and over again. They make a succession of nests, and so sightings of 30 nests do not necessarily mean a population of 30 of these highly endangered great apes. *BBC News* made the original report on Tuesday, 26 November 2002.

National University have found. That Northern and southern populations of the mountain brushtail possum are both morphologically and genetically distinct.

Ironically, genetic data was collected during 2001 when the scientists were investigating biological controls for the related common brushtail, which have become a serious pest in New Zealand.

Northern mountain brushtails in the forests of New South Wales and Queensland have smaller ears, shorter feet, and a longer, brushier tail than those in Victorian forests to the south. Genetic distances of 2.7 percent to three percent between the southern and northern populations of mountain brushtails further support their species status.



PLAYING POSSUM

Australian news agencies announced, on November 25, 2002, that a new species of brushtailed possum had been discovered. Although it is good news for the biodiversity of the world when a new species are uncovered, this discovery of this small arboreal marsupial is less exciting than some others. The animals have been known for many years but it has only been in the last few months that researchers at the Australian

It is proposed that the northern species should be called the short-eared possum, reflecting its distinctly smaller ear, although it would retain the scientific name *Trichosurus caninus*. This is because the species was originally named using specimens from the northern population in the 1830s.

The southern species will retain the common name, mountain brushtail possum, but gain a new scientific name, *Trichosurus cunninghami*.

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NUTTY DISCOVERY ON MOA ISLAND

Also from Australia is news of a new species of fruit bat. We are indebted to Darren Naish for news of the discovery of *Pteropus banakrisi*. He writes: *"It's from Moa Island (just north of Cape York Peninsula) and is unusual in being the smallest fruit bat reported thus far and in having a crested skull, war short robust teeth and powerful jaw muscles. Apparently it may be a nut cracker, a niche available to bats on Moa Island because of the low mammalian diversity there."*

inhabiting a small and threatened patch of tropical rainforest in Sri Lanka, it smacks somewhat of overkill, and underscored our profound ignorance of the natural world's diversity.

An international team of biologists led by Christopher Schneider of Boston have announced the discovery of between 100 and 140 new frog species in a paper for *Science*.

Dr Schneider said: *"We have only just begun the process of describing them and giving them names. They range in size from about an inch to four inches and come in all colours."*

Some of the newly found frogs lay eggs in the forest leaf litter that develop directly into tiny froglets, bypassing the typical tadpole phase. Dr Schneider said this adaptation may explain why these species have managed to survive in a rainforest that in recent decades had dwindled dramatically.

"By skipping the aquatic [stage], they may bypass a life stage when they are more vulnerable," he said.

The scientists also compared their frogs with other specimens collected more than a century ago.

They found that up to 100 species that had been collected in Sri Lanka more than 100 years ago were not among the current finds, suggesting they may since have been driven to extinction. However it does raise interesting questions about the rate of speciation within amphibia as a whole.

OPHIDIAN EPITAPH

Whereas the discovery of a new species of colubrid and in one of the tropical rain forests would not be particularly surprising, the discovery of a new snake in North America is a rare piece of news indeed. The new snake, and a corn snake that has been named *Elaphe slowinskii* exists only in the pine groves of western Louisiana and eastern Texas.

Its name is particularly poignant. Zoologist Frank T. Burbrink, who discovered the species named it after his mentor, Dr. Joseph Slowinski of California, who was fatally bitten by a krait on September 11th 2001 - but whose death was eclipsed by a far greater tragedy.

REIGN OF FROGS

Whereas it has to be said, that no one really says that there are no more new species to be discovered any more, when *BBC News* announced on 11th October 2002 that more than 100 new species of frogs have been found

You will know a civilisation by its frogs
Charles Hoy Fort

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LAKE AND SEA MONSTERS

ELASMOBRANCH SHANK

On Wednesday, September 18, 2002, the *Halifax Herald* announced the discovery of a strange, decomposing, carcass between six and seven metres in length on a rocky beach in Annapolis County, Nova Scotia. Although it cannot be seen on this photograph, the body has reported to have what appears to be a long neck. It is probable from an examination of this photograph that the deceased creature was a basking shark. The fibrous nature of the flesh is indicative of decomposing cartilage, and the sheer size would indicate the species in question. Bernard Heuvelmans pointed out the way that a decomposing shark carcass can easily be confused with that of a mysterious sea-monster, in his seminal work *In the wake of the sea-serpents* (1968).

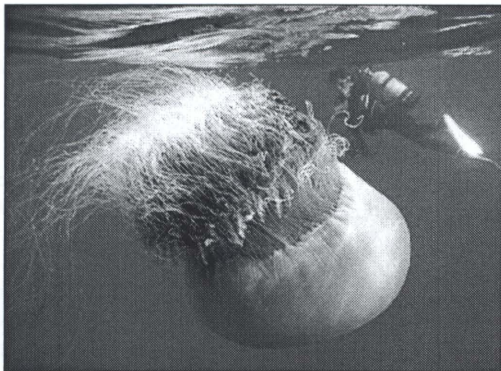


It is an interesting coincidence, however, that this decomposing fish has been found in an area noted for centuries as a hot spot for sea-

serpent sightings. Let's hope that eventually the real thing will be found on a beach in the Bay of Fundy.

COELENTRATE CONVENTION

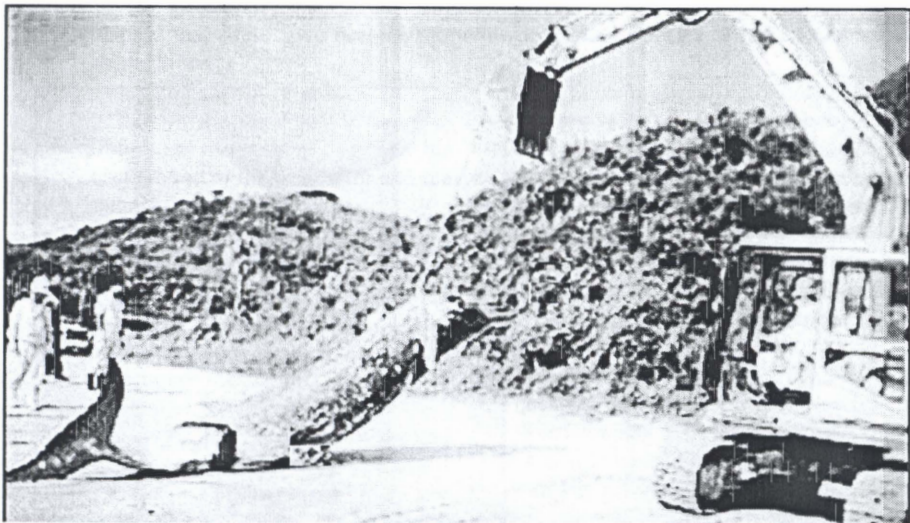
On 28th November 2002 *Ananova* reported that a plague of giant jellyfish had been infesting the Sea of Japan since mid-August. The species, identified as *Stomolophus nomurai*, were first found in 1920, said Toru Yasuda, a marine biologist formerly at Fukui University, but such enormous numbers have not been reported since 1958. It is not known why a plague of this size has occurred at this time, but the spectre of global-warming has once again been invoked as a possible explanation.



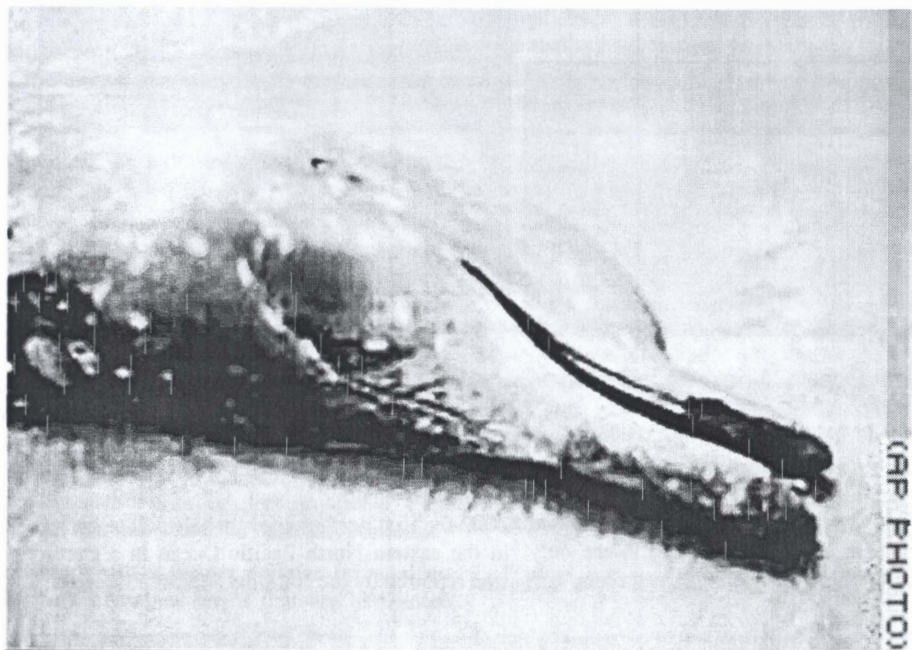
Despite their size these colossal coelenterates are harmless to humans. Although they are of a known species, the appearance of such giants is an encouraging sign to cryptozoologists.

In his book *From Flying Toads to Snakes with Wings* (1997), Karl Shuker discusses a number of giant jellyfish, some of which he hypothesises may well be new species.

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Longman's Beaked Whale washed up in Japan



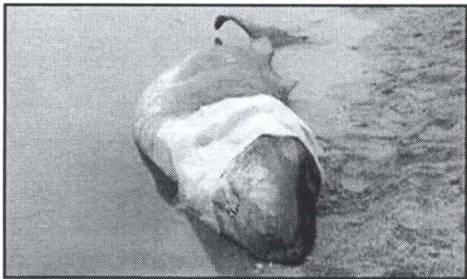
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CETACEAN NATION

January 2002.

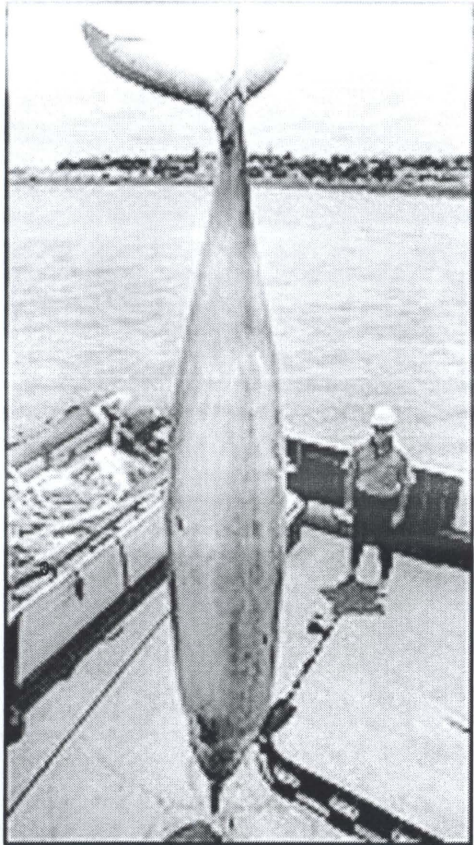
Over the past six months, a whole spate of rare whales has been washed up on beaches around the world. In some cases, these are the first intact specimens of that particular species ever to have been found. On Boxing Day, *Associated Press*, announced that a specimen of Longman's Beaked Whale, (*Mesoplodon pacificus*), found on a beach in Japan last July, was the most complete ever found.

In August *Reuters* announced that another example of the same species had been washed up in South Africa, and on 21st January 2003 the *New Zealand Herald* announced that a 4 metre female Grey's Beaked Whale (*M. greyi*), had been washed up on Waiheke Island. A marine mammal biologist, Dr Rochelle Constantine, of the University of Auckland, said so little was known about this species than it was impossible to know whether it was rare or not.



Pygmy Sperm Whale on a Devon Beach

Closer to home, another rare whale - a fully-grown female pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*), was washed up on an unnamed Devon beach. Typically the CFZ were only informed of this in a telephone call from Tim



Grey's Beaked Whale
in New Zealand

In a refreshing change to the other news in the section, an item of rare cetacean news featuring a living and healthy animal. On September 20th, 2002 the first northern right whale calf to be seen in the eastern North Pacific Ocean in a century was reported by the National Marine Fisheries.

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Northern right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*), are possibly the most endangered whales on the planet. Their name comes from the fact that they were the "right" whales to be harvested. They grow very slowly and live to an immense age. Analysis of a specimen harpooned during the 1960s showed that this beast - killed in its prime during the heyday of the Beatles - was probably born at about the same time as Mozart. Because of their long lives, they breed incredibly slowly, and although the sighting of a right whale calf is tremendously exciting, it will not be until our grand children are grown-up that scientists will know whether this species have any real chance of survival.



MOJAVE MONKEYS

On November 25, 2002 the *Mohave Valley News* laid one of the more notorious Bigfoot stories of recent years to an untimely rest. However, they reported that although the original report that brought Bigfoot Researchers to the town of Bullhead City in October had been a hoax there was still evidence that the hairy hominid may well still be found within the area. Brad Mortensen and Will Wicklund are Arizona investigators with the BFRO (Bigfoot Field Research Organisation). They were investigating a report left on the organization's website in October.

"BFRO labeled that sighting as a hoax. It was submitted by a 17-year-old boy and he lied in several parts. That, coupled with the fact that we found absolutely nothing led us to determine it was a hoax," Mortensen said.

"The first flag that went up was the size of the footprint he gave. From the thousands of legitimate calls the BFRO gets, it was clear the footprint he described was too big for the size of the creature he gave."

In spite of the hoax, Mortensen said he hasn't given up yet because the organization has received a report of another sighting in the Bullhead City area. *"We have since had another report. They named one physical characteristic that was identical to a report from Kingman back in the '70s. Some of the features are almost identical and the one (characteristic) is not real common."* Mortensen said he hesitates to name the physical feature because it *"would just give merit to anyone who wanted to jerk our chain."*

Then another Bullhead City resident came forward with what he believes may be a link to the recent local stories. Fred Eck, who is a history buff and past executive director of the Bullhead Area Chamber of Commerce remembers some Mojave Indian legends that fit the description of Bigfoot. *"This was told to me by Sandy McDonald about 1986 or 1987, 15 years ago at least. He seemed to know an awful lot about the legends. I met him when I was the manager of the chamber,"* Eck said. According to Eck, Sandy McDonald was an elder in the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe who has since died. He said McDonald told him two stories about signs of big creatures in the area.

"There were legends of giant men that lived in the Spirit Mountains at one time. They were seven or eight foot tall. The Mojaves feared them because of their size. The other story, I'm not sure if he had seen it or it was part of a legend. The way Sandy told me there was a time when he or somebody had gone down along Topock Marsh and they saw these big footprints. They weren't animal; not dog or webbed foot ducks or anything, but a humanoid type of footprints."

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They came out of the water and went up so many feet on the bank and then just disappeared," Eck said.

WOONG THE ANTHROPOID LOBBY WAS A WINNER

It is almost unprecedented for this magazine it to cover political news. However, we feel it important to note that on November the 5th 2002 Democrat Ted Kulongoski defeated Republican Kevin Mannix in Oregon. In 1977, Kulongoski sponsored a bill to protect Bigfoot from harassment, with a penalty of two days of picking up trash on state highways. Thank you to Loren Coleman for this heartwarming snippet of news.

PATTY PRINT PRIZE

On January 21st a number of US newspapers reported that a reward of \$100,000 dollars is being offered by the Willow Creek-China Flat Museum for anyone who can demonstrate how the "Bigfoot" tracks that were observed in the Bluff Creek valley in northern California in 1958 and later could have been faked. In a bizarre synchronicity, the CFZ forked out sixty quid for a copy of one of the prints taken after the notorious Roger Patterson sighting from 1967 and would be delighted to be able to recoup our money!

The museum states:

The offer also is not a prize for technological achievement, such as being the first to build an effective footprint-stamping machine. It relates entirely to the question of whether the real tracks that brought the "Bigfoot" phenomenon to public attention could have been made by humans under the real conditions of the times and the places in which they appeared [...] A formal document setting out the requirements to qualify for the award will take time to prepare, but a successful applicant will have to be able to make flat-footed, humanlike tracks with more than twice the area of human feet and longer-than-human strides which do the following:

- Traverse a variety of terrains, including climbing, descending and crossing steep slopes covered with underbrush
- Show variations of shape and toe position and stride accommodating to the terrain;
- Sink into firm ground to far greater depth than human footprints, specifically, as much as an inch deep in hard sand where human prints barely penetrate at all;
- Leave hard objects in the ground, such as stones, sticking up above the rest of the track.

The applicant will also have to be able to make these tracks under the following conditions, although not all in combination:

- In the dark, hundreds of tracks in a single night;
- In places where it is impossible to bring any vehicle or other machine or any equipment except what humans or animals could carry
- Without doing anything to attract the notice of people a few hundred yards away.

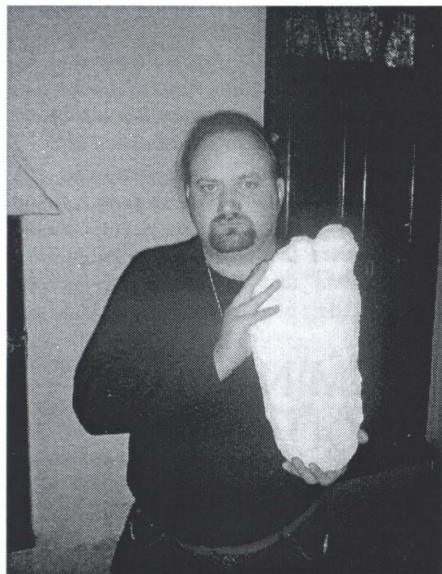
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Comments to:

WILLOW CREEK-CHINA FLAT MUSEUM
P.O. Box 102, Willow Creek, California 95573-0102

(530) 629-2653

Interested parties may contact Jo Ann Hereford, Board President, 530-629-3726.



Richard Freeman brandishes our sixty quid paperweight

WEAVER IN THE VAULT

After the death of Ray Wallace (see obituaries this issue), newspapers around the world claimed that "Bigfoot is Dead". As can be seen in the main or feature article in this magazine, almost immediately BHM reports started coming in from all over the world. The *Summit Daily News* of Colorado carried a story on

January 13, 2003, which told how Trevor Denny, an avid hiker from the town of Wilderrest, was hiking with his puppy on the Mesa Cortina trail between Red and Buffalo mountains in the Gore Range during June when he noticed several footprints on the trail.

"I was looking down at my dog and I just caught them out of the corner of my eye," he said of the discovery. "My first thought was, "I wish I had a camera."" Denny said the footprints he found - the largest of which measured 12 to 13 inches in length - were in the middle of the trail and intermingled with bear paw prints. Denny followed the footprints up the trail until they faded away. The footprints appear human, Denny said, with five distinct toes and no claws. But they're far larger than any footprints he's ever seen. *"I have no idea what it could be. But I like to keep an open mind."*

KASHMIR FEAR

Reports of the North American Bigfoot appear quite regularly in these pages. It has always been somewhat of an irony that reports of the yeti in Central Asia are considerably less common, despite the fact that there is considerably more evidence for its physical existence.

We are particularly pleased therefore to reported that on 10-January-2003 an Indian news agency carried an account of a 20 year-old Kashmiri youth who was in no doubt that he had been attacked by the Abominable Snowman. Raja Wasim, nicknamed Raju by his parents, was preparing to feed cattle at his uncle's cowshed.

"He heard a strange noise among the greens in the lawn of the house. When he turned around, there it stood: a four-foot-tall monster, covered with dense, dark, black hair all over, "looking menacingly" at the youth."

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He is quoted as saying: *"There is no mistake about what I saw. The monster had the face of a man with monkey-like features. It was four feet tall, but extremely sturdy. It was the Snowman. It pounced at me and I jumped back on the veranda, shouting for help. My uncle and his family rushed to my rescue and the monster lazily walked away. It was hardly frightened by the commotion."*

The incident was confirmed by Raju's uncle Muhammad Shafi, (47). He told the Indian press:

"After the initial appearance, we burnt fires to scare the visitor and he rushed out of the hedges and crossed to the other side of an apple orchard. I saw it myself. The description matches Raju's. In addition, the animal made a shrill whistle when frightened. Perhaps scared by the fires, it whistled while running away".

Rehman Magray, 89, and an elder of the village says: *"In our youth there used to be very heavy snowfall. We had five metres deep snow on the ground. There was no electricity. The only lighting we had was from oil lamps or resin-wood fire torches that we carried while moving about in the dark. Almost regularly, the Snowman would visit this village and others close to the mountains where heavy snow made feeding difficult for them during harsh winters."*

Much though we would like to believe that this is a genuine example of an encounter with the legendary man-beast, the the animal that the Kashmiri youth describes would seem to have much more in common with the recent accounts of the "Monkey Man" which terrorised much of the sub-continent a couple of years ago. The phenomenon even turned up as a name check on *The Simpsons*. However, there are several accounts of smaller Yeti -

type creatures in the Kashmir area. Writing in *Modern Mysteries of the World* (1990), Janet and Colin Bord recount one such incident:

"Late January 1987, a 17 year-old youth living in a village in northern Kashmir stepped outside at 9:30pm carrying his fire pot - a clay pot containing embers - when he was attacked by a 4 ft tall hairy creature standing on two legs. He hit it with the fire pot and it squealed and ran away. Two other villagers, who heard the noise, looked out and saw the creature running away on two legs. It jumped a ditch in a man-like way. Eighteen fine red hairs were found attached to the fire pot and sent for analysis. The hairs were shown to come from a Himalayan brown bear".

Richard Freeman notes that adult brown bears are much bigger than that however, and no known bears run on their hind legs.

SEMINAL SASQUATCH SUPPORTERS

The putative existence of unknown higher primates in North America was given a surprising seal of approval according to a number of newspapers on the 5th January this year when a group of the world's most eminent primatologists expressed their belief in the subject.

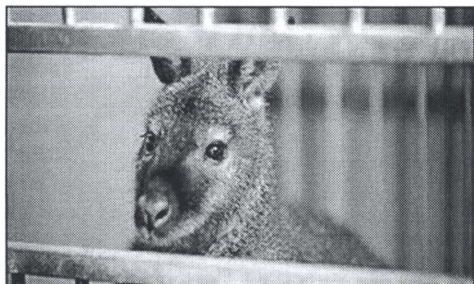
- Jane Goodall, made famous by her studies of chimpanzees in Tanzania
- Daris Swindler, recently retired after more than 30 years at the University of Washington, where he was an acclaimed expert in the arcane study of fossilized primate teeth,

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- George Schaller, International science director for the Wildlife Conservation Society
- Russell Mittermeier, a trained primatologist, herpetologist and biological anthropologist, who has discovered five new species of monkey, including two last year.
- Esteban Sarmiento, a functional anatomist affiliated with the American Museum of Natural History



WALLABIES HOP IT!



All these researchers have risked their scientific credibility by openly speculating that Bigfoot may well exist.

Schaller remains troubled by the fact no Bigfoot remains have been produced, nor have any samples of faeces whose DNA can be chemically poked and prodded to unlock the identity of their maker. But he says:

"There have been so many sightings over the years," he said.

"Even if you throw out 95 percent of them, there ought to be some explanation for the rest. The same goes for some of these tracks. I think a hard-eyed look is absolutely essential."

"This is immense," said author John Green, who has tracked Bigfoot reports for almost half a century from British Columbia and investigated some of the most famous sightings and track finds.

"The possibility that there could be a real animal behind it just didn't occur to scientists 20 years ago."

Even with a war brewing in Iraq, the weeks before Christmas are often ones when people working on newspapers and TV news show worldwide are scrambling around for news. Quite how the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* got hold of a story, which, frankly, would not really even have made headline news in Denmark, where it originated, we don't know. However on Monday, December 16, 2002 they posted an excited headline claiming that there was a rogue kangaroo on the loose in Copenhagen. For some reason, even Australian journalists, insist on labelling any hopping marsupial as a kangaroo when, in our experience at least, it is the much smaller Bennett's wallaby that has a history of forteen happenstance around it.

It is this species that becomes naturalised in parts of the world where wallabies were never meant to roam. It is this species that get hacked up by maniacs, or putative aliens, and indeed it was a specimen of the species - named Jerry - that had escaped from his home at a suburban youth

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centre on November 2nd. *"It's a wild animal and not easy to catch but we look for it as we drive around,"* a police spokeswoman said.

Arne Christoffersen, head of the centre, said that the marsupial's dash for freedom had left the kids broken-hearted. *"It was their mascot and they have spent a lot of time looking for it."*

It is strange how some stories capture the public imagination. Quite how this one did, we find it hard to explain, but on 10th January 2003, the media around the world were alerted by *BBC Worldwide News* that Jerry had been shot by a tranquiliser dart in the Broenshoej neighbourhood of the city. But the story did not end there. Jerry had always been popular with the children at the youth centre but he had been wild and intractable. Upon his return everything was changed.

"Before we could not touch him, or only when he was running," says carer Arefa Dauti. *"Now we can touch him and feed him. When you talk to him, he looks at you, and wants to come near you."*

From our point of view, the story of one wallaby's two-month holiday is hardly worth noting. Bennett's wallabies are two a penny in captivity, and as previously noted, they crop up within the other pages of forteen journals with remarkable regularity. No, the most important thing about the story as far as we're concerned, is the way that a piece of perfectly innocuous and minor news based around a children's centre in the suburbs of Copenhagen, through the medium of global communications became worldwide news. If we could solve the mystery of how *this* happens, then we would be far nearer to understanding the forteen omniverse.

In an entirely unrelated incident *ABC News* on Tuesday, September 17, 2002, broadcast another weird story of a fugitive kangaroo, nicknamed "Skippy" (with an alarming lack of imagination), which was found wandering around the trendiest nightclub district of Milan after having escaped from a circus.

WATCH THE BIRDIE

There has been a spate of unusual avian arrivals across North America in recent months. The *Douglas County News-Press* announced on November 23, 2002 that birdwatchers from all over the continent had converged on Franktown, Colorado to see an Arctic loon - never seen before in North America.

Meanwhile in Anchorage, Alaska according to the *Anchorage Daily News* on December 29, 2002, the annual bird count has thrown up a number of surprises.

- The first sighting of a Swainson's thrush in Alaska
- Two harlequin ducks were sighted, breaking the old record by one and making this the fourth year the species has been counted.
- Common goldeneye ducks broke the 1969 record at 59.
- European starlings numbered six, one more than the 1997 record.
- And 9,967 Bohemian waxwings broke the abundant 2000 record by 159.
- Two mew gulls, which haven't been spotted during the count since 1974, were sighted at the mouth of Ship Creek.
- Three herring gulls were seen for the first time since 1986
- glaucous-winged gulls were present for the first time since 1993.
- A single gadwall and a yellow-rumped warbler were sighted for only the second time in the count's history.

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- A varied thrush, was the fourth ever spotted during the count.

No-one has the slightest idea where the Blackpool specimen came from.

RATITE RAMBLINGS

Fortean across the United States were put on alert for possible Jersey Devil reports when the Atlantic City Press reported what must be the headline of the year on November 28, 2002. "Goat helps emu escape in Fairfield". Duke, a male emu had escaped from the paddock he shared with his mate, Daisy. Duke had escaped twice from his home in the New Jersey Pine Barrens and the culprit turned out to be a feral goat who had, according to his owner "*become so infatuated with the emus, he actually carved out a place in the pen's fence to get in and out.*"

Meanwhile according to the *Shropshire Star* on 8th December: "*A shocked Shropshire teacher barricaded herself in her home this morning after she looked through her kitchen window and saw an ostrich stalking around the back yard of her home.*"

IBIS WITH NO TASTE

Certainly the most peculiar account of an out of place bird on mainland Britain for some years appeared in the *Guardian* on October 30, 2002. A northern bald ibis – one of the rarest birds in the world - was discovered close to Blackpool Pleasure Beach by a group of children. The species is battling against extinction, and until recently only 220 of these birds were known to exist in the wild, in three protected colonies in Morocco. Earlier this year a further seven birds were found in Syria.

In one final piece of quasi-fortean synchronicity, just as we were putting this issue together we are searching for a picture of the Blackpool Ibis. As is our usual practice we typed in "+Ibis +Blackpool" into Altavista, only to find one of the most bizarre sets of lexilinks that we have ever come across. Blackpool boasts an Ibis hotel, an Ibis Cricket Club and various other institutions that have chosen to name themselves after these *rara aves*.

MANX PRANKS

The Times on November 27, 2002 published the latest instalment in a perplexing saga involving the wildlife of the Isle of Man. The island, renowned as a haven for endangered birds, has been free of foxes for centuries, and as a result rare ground-nesting bird species have flourished. The island is also home to a population of stoats whose taxonomy presents one of the enduring, minor mysteries for British mammalogists. No one seems certain whether they are of the tiny Irish sub-species, or whether they are something distinct. One thing is certain, however: despite oft-stated belief, foxes do turn up on the island every few years - and nobody knows how.

In October the Manx Government's vermin control officer reported sighting two fox cubs in an area that has been kept secret for fear of compromising a proposed cull. Fortean Zoologists around the world, are speculating whether the Manx government's claims that these animals have been imported illegally are true.

If there is indeed, a small but viable population of foxes living on the island, surely they should be investigated before they are destroyed. If the

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island has produced a distinct variety of stoat, then perhaps Manx foxes are also - in some way - unique. After all this was the island that not only produced the tail-less cat but was also once the home of Jef - the talking mongoose of Cashen's Gap.

THE WEB OF FEAR

In November 2002, *Ananova* published a series of accounts of poisonous black widow spiders being found in fruit in Tesco supermarkets around the country. Noelle Bolzern from Merseyside was washing some Californian grapes when she spotted the creature. It was about the size of a 5p piece and was already dead. She thought it was a common house spider and served the fruit to her family. A Tesco spokesman said: *"Safety is our top priority and we have a rigorous checking process in countries which produce our fruit. We apologise to the family concerned and we will be talking to the producer in California to ensure procedures are being followed."*

More incidents occurred across the country, and over the following weeks one of the most bizarre conspiracy theories that we have ever heard began to emerge. Matters came to a head on the 28th of November when a spokesman from Tesco's had to make an official announcement that the company had most categorically not been using black widow spiders as part of a campaign to keep pests off their fruit. The CFZ news team were laughing too much to comment. Richard Freeman later pointed out that this would be a ridiculous practice for Tesco's to embrace. Not only are black widow spiders not the optimum predator to use in a situation like this, but in order to be effective the management of the fruit farms would have to breed the poisonous arachnids in phenomenal numbers, and even for a

multinational member of the military-industrial complex this would be a remarkably stupid thing to do.

SNOUT WRONG WITH THAT

BBC Online News 7/12/02 announced that a wild boar had been hit and killed by a car in Gloucestershire. Mr Keevil, a computer software engineer from Cheltenham, saw the creature emerge from the central reservation. It trotted onto the A40 right in front of his car. He could not avoid hitting the animal and then smashed into a lamp-post. The dead creature was taken to the Veterinary Investigation Centre in Somerset for examination and DEFRA vets later confirmed it was a wild boar. *"There are some wild boars living wild in south Kent and in Dorset, but we have no knowledge of any living wild in Gloucestershire."* DEFRA spokeswoman Theo Wood said.

As a result of this publicity another small group of out of place animals came to light - a colony of Vietnamese Pot Bellied pigs near Ross on Wye.

CANAL CONSTRICTOR

For some years the CFZ have been following up reports of a giant eel seen in the Birmingham Ship Canal about fifteen years ago. However we were not prepared for the latest strange beast from the area - a 15-foot python found dead in the canal on January 23 2003. According to the *Birmingham Evening Mail* Inspector Rob Hartley, based at the RSPCA rescue centre in Barnes Hill, said:

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"It's like something out of a horror movie. This thing is massive; we've never seen one this big before. It's a monster. We've measured it at fourteen and a half feet and up to 14 inches wide. It probably weighs at least 11 stone. It could kill a child by wrapping itself around it and suffocating it. We don't know whether it simply got too big for someone to look after and they let it go free or it escaped."

Inspector Hartley said the snake's size indicated it had been well cared for even though it would have devoured around two dozen dead mice or day-old chicks a day. He said Burmese Pythons were relatively common pets but usually reached only about six feet in captivity. The CFZ are not known for joining in campaigns to get anything banned. On the whole we tend to believe that there are too many government departments telling us not to do things already. However, following our own unfortunate experiences with a Burmese python, we would strongly support any moves to redefine the terms of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act, to include these creatures.

CONSERVATION

KAKAPO KAPERS

On February 18th 2002 Reuters announced the excellent news that there has been a population explosion amongst one of the world's rarest and strangest birds. The kakapo – a flightless nocturnal parrot from New Zealand had a record egg-laying season. At the time there were only 62 of the birds left in the world – mostly on the remote Codfish Island, a wind-swept predator-free islet of less than five square km (two square miles) near Stewart Island in New Zealand's deep south.

Department of Conservation (DOC) staffs discovered 52 kakapo eggs and were hopeful that at least 50 per cent of them would hatch.

Previously, no kakapo egg had been found for three years and some of the nesting birds had not laid for more than 20 years.

TO BECOME EXTINCT ONCE IS UNFORTUNATE – TO BECOME EXTINCT TWICE LOOKS LIKE CARELESSNESS

It's bad news for one of Britain's most extraordinary game birds, warned *The Guardian* on August 7th, 2002.

The capercaillie – a turkey sized protected species was hunted to extinction in the United Kingdom in the latter part of the 18th Century, but was reintroduced nearly a hundred years later. However, numbers, of the capercaillie have sunk to less than 1,000 from 20,000 15 years ago.

Warm and wet summers in Scots pine forests mean capercaillie chicks running across the forest floor die from the damp on cold nights. Despite being heavily protected and efforts being made to recreate the best pine wood habitats, the capercaillie has continued to decline. Since it survives in Siberia, it is the damp rather than cold that is causing the problem.

EXTINCTION WATCH

The extraordinary biodiversity of a finch species on the Galapagos Islands provided one of the biggest clues to Charles Darwin whilst he was formulating his theory of evolution.

These tiny birds have become icons for global biodiversity, but according to *BBC News Online*

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on 8 November 2002, many of these species are facing imminent extinction due to the predations of the larvae of parasitic flies.

surrogate NHN wombat (or a closely related surrogate mother, for instance a common wombat."

On the same day *The Guardian* announced the imminent extinction of the Iberian Lynx, the largest felid in western Europe. Four years ago, official estimates of the number of wild specimens numbered 1,000. Now experts agree that there were probably now fewer than 200 left.

The Sumatran Tiger is also facing extinction. The Indonesian government says 33 tigers are slaughtered each year. If the killings continue the remaining 500 tigers on Sumatra will be gone by 2014.

WOMB WITH A VIEW

The *Electronic Telegraph* (27/09/2002) reported that new technology, and ovary transplants could help save the northern hairy-nosed wombat from extinction. Dingo attacks, loss of native grasses on which they feed, and competition from kangaroos and rabbits, this wombat is arguably Australia's most endangered mammal.

Only about 100 survive in a square mile of Epping Forest National Park, Queensland.

A spokesman is quoted as saying: "*We are xenografting common wombat ovarian tissue into rodents to see if we can grow eggs from these species ... and hopefully fertilise them.*"

The next step would be to take ovarian tissue from the northern hairy nosed wombat, xenograft it into a rat to produce eggs for fertilisation with sperm from the NHN wombat, and transfer the embryos into a

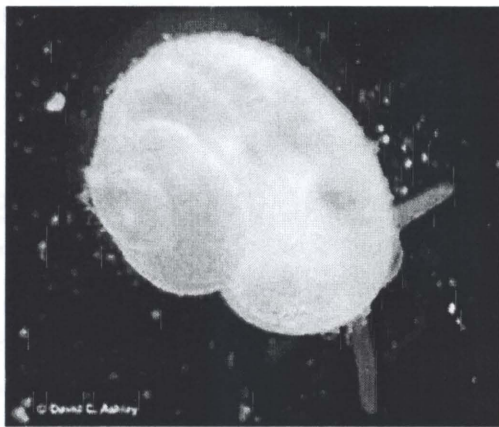
OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS

A tiny snail, no bigger than a grain of sand, which lives only in one cave in the Ozark mountains has been placed on the federal endangered species list.

It is hoped that making the list will help the cavesnail rebound from a steady decline he blames on water pollution.

Naming the cavesnail to what is known as the "standard" Endangered Species Act is expected to start a 12-month planning process involving surveying the cavesnail's habitat and testing water quality.

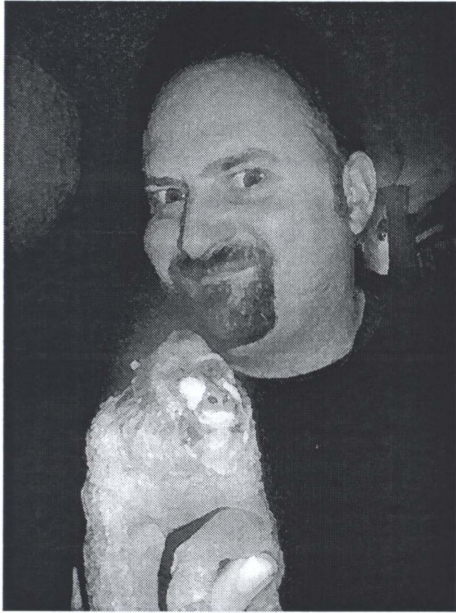
Although the effort is aimed at the tiny snail, some of the research could point out how minor environmental changes, such as overgrazing or deforestation, can have wider effects even in undeveloped, rural areas.



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And finally
Richard....

obituaries



Raymond L. Wallace Bigfoot Story Teller (1919-2002)

Ray Wallace was a building contractor whose company was building a new road through northern California in 1958 when the first large the footprints were discovered by his employee Jerry Crew. He made the first plaster-casts of these prints, and so the Bigfoot legend was born. Although there had been accounts of giant hairy man beasts across North America ever since the first European settlers arrived, and indeed Sasquatch is a well-known icon in the mythology of several Native American tribes, it was not until Wallace and his cronies publicised their discovery that the legend entered the public consciousness.

Wallace was an inveterate prankster. According to Loren Coleman: *"Allegedly, late in the 1950s, for example, Wallace offered to sell Texas millionaire Tom Slick a captured Bigfoot. Wallace failed to produce the creature when Slick came up with an offer"*, and it is indisputable that he was involved in the more dubious areas of Bigfoot research, which bordered upon farce, for much of the rest of his life.

As Loren Coleman wrote: *"Ray Wallace added an intriguing, mostly harmless story-telling element to the otherwise often serious pursuit of Bigfoot"*. He enriched the subject in much the same way as Tony Shiels has enriched the world of monster hunting in the United Kingdom. The world will be a poorer place without him.

Ray Wallace was interred at the Lone Hill Cemetery in Toledo, Washington State, on November 30, 2002.

We are used to reports of the British Government squandering public money on pointless projects such as the Millennium Dome, but the news item printed in *The Guardian* on September 27, 2002, really takes the (disco) biscuit. An ongoing series of trials has proved that giving ecstasy (MDMA) to baboons is not a good idea! The trials show that the monkeys started showing symptoms of decreased higher brain functions, and increased aggression. Well Duh!!!

We contacted the DoF&E for comments but they were unwilling to speak to us. "Nice one Geezer" a spokesman didn't say, nor did he claim to be sorted for E's and whiz.

obituaries

Quentin Rose

In the autumn of 2000, I worked on a BBC documentary show, filmed in the tiny Welsh village of Trellech where there had been an alleged big cat attack upon a local child.

One of the other main contributors was Quentin Rose. I must admit that I was wary when I first met him - I had heard so much nonsense spoken about him, that, I had not been impressed.

However, when I met him, I was very pleasantly surprised. He was a decent, intelligent, man and he told me how appalled he was about the rumours, which had circulated about him. We made plans to collaborate again in the future. Sadly this was not to be.

Quentin sadly died of septicemia in early October.

Quentin had been a zookeeper looking after big cats in a number of zoos. He then lived for several years with Indian tribes in the Canadian arctic where he acquired his trapping skills. He was also very concerned about the welfare of wild animals and had been developing a leg 'cutt' snare, designed to avoid some of the injuries, which snares can cause.

In a genre full of charlatans, he was a welcome breath of fresh air and will be missed by all.

In this issue of *Animals & Men* we also say goodbye to:

JOE STRUMMER: The guitarist and songwriter with *The Clash* who was one of the few truly ethical rock musicians in a business not exactly known for its moral fibre. His 'bullshit detector' remains switched on at the CFZ. He was fifty years old.

VIRGINIA HEINLEIN: The widow of the author of *Stranger in a Strange Land* joined her husband soon after Christmas. She was the inspiration for many of his most memorable female characters, and less well-known - she was the person responsible for introducing her husband to the realms of fortune.

GERTRUDE JANEWAY: The last widow of a Union Soldier from the American Civil War died in the log cabin where she had lived since 1933. She was just sixteen when she married her late husband who was in his mid 70s at the time. She was 93.

SAM LEWIS: As possibly the world's only armadillo wrangler, Sam Lewis was a legend in Texas. In 1951 after a spell in the USAAF and some time spent selling pizzas he had the bright idea of organising armadillo races and owned an armadillo ranch. He died aged 80, in San Antonio, TX.

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WHAT'S NEW PUSSY CAT?

Due to popular demand, we have instituted a new section in *Animals & Men*. Over the last couple of years, we have received repeated requests for more coverage of alien big cats [ABC's]. To be quite honest, the internecine politics of the British Big Cat Research world have put us off somewhat, and rather than get embroiled in the vicious infighting which threatens, often, to make ABC research into something more resembling one of the less salubrious suburbs of Beirut, we have broadly left the subject alone.

As we enter our second decade, we decided that as the largest Cryptozoological research organisation in the world, we had a duty both to our readers, ourselves and to the community at large to start becoming more involved in the research into ABC's around the world. As the CFZ trundles on slowly into the 21st century, we plan to expand in all sorts of directions. This new section of the magazine is, the humblest of beginnings for a planned ABC Study Group within the CFZ. Comments and suggestions for how this semi-autonomous study group should proceed will be gratefully received.

We have no intention of getting involved in politicising. It is probably the reason that we have survived so long, and we have no intention starting now. Over the years, with the

exception of Jan Ove Sundberg we have not seriously fallen out with anybody.

The CFZ has always been non-partisan and will remain so. Members of many of the different factions of British Big Cat researchers are amongst our subscribers, and are also amongst our personal friends. We intend to keep it that way. JD

A PLETHORA OF PUSSYCATS

We are always amazed at the sheer volume of British ABC reports that arrive in our mail. It would be a thankless, and frankly impossible task to try and catalogue all of the Big Cat reports over a given period. Over the last year we have been working together with environmental ecologist Elaine Matheison in an attempt to produce a definitive listing of West Country ABC Sightings. *Animals & Men* subscriber, Marcus Matthews has produced an enormous three-volume listing of big cat sightings in the UK up to 1990. Hopefully they will be published very soon.

We shall, therefore, limit ourselves to those news reports, which provide certain points of interest to the readers of this magazine, rather than a vague accounts of a catlike animal and running across the road in front of a car.

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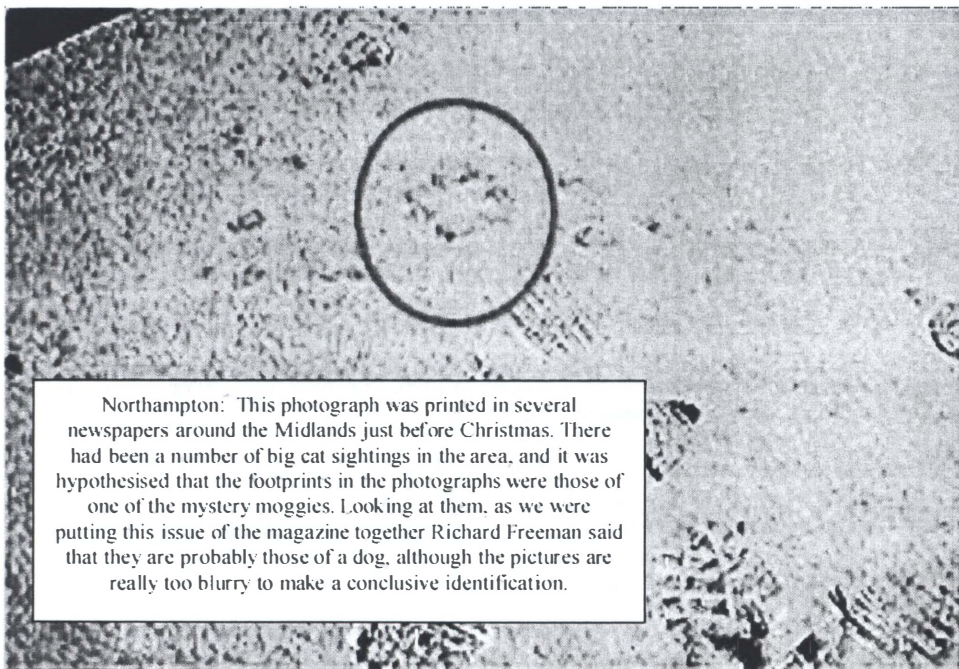
• Lake District

The *Westmorland Gazette* of Tuesday 14th January 2003 told the story of Rosemary Wilson, (17), a sixth form pupil at Dallam School, Milnthorpe, who saw a cat which she described as being three feet long, on a piece of rough ground bordered by woodland between Fell End and Beetham caravan parks. She described how she had watched the animal walking in her direction for about ten seconds before it disappeared in the hedge. This is typical of most of the reports we receive at the CFZ. It tells us practically nothing, and although the newspaper report went on to describe the animal as being like a Puma, years of bad experiences have proven to us that regional newspaper correspondents are not always right at the top of the food chain, and use the words Panther, Puma, Lioness, and Lynx as if a they are all synonyms for the same creature.

They blithely ignore the fact that the largest lynx only achieves a length of 48 inches, where the largest leopard can reach a length of at least 9.6 feet.

• Wales

Events in Wales, however, were far more dramatic. Newspaper reports (in the *Shropshire Star*), on 16th January quoted Dyfed Powys police as saying that they were investigating a "possible fifth sighting of the mystery panther-like beast believed to be roaming the Mid Wales countryside". As, apparently the major piece of evidence for this was that "a woman spotted an animal prowling around her back garden in Llanedi which was reported to be bigger than her cat but smaller than her dog", we find it hard to understand why a detachment of armed police officers had been sent to the scene.



Northampton: This photograph was printed in several newspapers around the Midlands just before Christmas. There had been a number of big cat sightings in the area, and it was hypothesised that the footprints in the photographs were those of one of the mystery moggies. Looking at them, as we were putting this issue of the magazine together Richard Freeman said that they are probably those of a dog, although the pictures are really too blurry to make a conclusive identification.

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the sighting was still unsubstantiated and officers at the scene had seen nothing although "it may have fled before their arrival."

A post mortem on a whippet – alleged to be a victim of the big cat – confirmed it was killed by a 'large predator' but at the time of going to press, police are still awaiting the results of further DNA tests on hairs found in the dog's mouth. Events had started becoming exciting the previous week when, 17 miles north of Llanedi, in Llangadog, the creature was believed to have savagely killed a pensioner's dog.

Photographs of some very dubious looking paw-prints found at the scene and reproduced in the *Daily Mail* (incidentally they the newspaper which published those even more dubious Loch Ness pictures last year) were identified by CFZ Zoologist Richard Freeman as those of a large dog.

However, the following day, the *South Wales Argus* reported that "*Goytre man Kevin Phillips hopes he has evidence which may prove the existence of a big cat in Gwent.*" One hopes sincerely that this is a description of a place where he lives, rather than a somewhat pejorative description of his medical condition.

Mr Phillips, who owns a smallholding on the mountains between Blaenavon and Abergavenny, took a plaster cast and photographs of what he believes to be a big cat's footprint. Unfortunately this news item arrived to us over the Internet and if there were any photographs accompanying the article we have not seen them. It is probably not fair to comment any further, especially as the news item goes on to mention the alleged attack in 2000 on schoolboy, Josh Hopkins who said he had been attacked by a panther-type animal which clawed his face.

Jon visited the small town of Trellech within days of the attack, and the fact that there are libel laws in this country, preclude us from commenting further on the case. Sufficient to say that we are not prepared to include that particular incident as a *bona fide* account of a British big cat attack.

The Welsh police really went to town on this incident, and a number of newspapers reported how teams of armed police continued to stake out the farm where the dog had been killed. Police warned the public and farmers not to search for the puma-like cat. Only four months before Gwent Police used two helicopters equipped with thermal-imaging cameras to search for a similar beast reported on farmland near Newport.

Farmers working in the area were urged to patrol in pairs and to carry powerful torches as a way of protecting themselves from possible attack. Every big cat pundit in the country was interviewed - various members of the CFZ and our supporters became regular fixtures on radio news programmes, and Neil Arnold - one of the most enthusiastic young researchers in the country (and a regular contributor to this magazine) - appeared on *Sky News* with some very convincing plaster-casts and video evidence. He can be found expanding on ever this latest evidence on the Kent Big Cat search in the latest edition of the CFZ Yearbook.

One newspaper even managed the outstanding feat of quoting Quentin Rose. This piece of journalism was remarkable because Quentin had died some weeks before.

On 10th January more sightings were reported in Ffairfach - around 10 miles from Llangadog, said a Dyfed Powys Police spokesman. "*It was seen at around mid-day about 10 or 12 miles south of the original location*". The spokesman said a milk tanker driver who was collecting milk from

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a farm reported the sighting. Police had by now changed tactics - they had switched from static observation in Llangadog to a mobile-armed response with armed officers in patrol cars.

At the time of writing (24th January), the creature was still at large.

- Gloucestershire

It would probably be cynical of us to suggest that rising crime figures and a culture where the Police are under continual attack from the media has prompted the remarkable surge of police involvement in big cat investigations across the UK in recent months. Although, at no time reaching the bizarre heights of the events recounted above where police marksmen were deployed across Central Wales like Scud missiles in Baghdad, the Gloucestershire Constabulary got in on the act in November.

The *Gloucestershire Echo* on 7th November 2002, proudly announced that "POLICE ARE READY FOR THE BEASTS". On hearing this news, CFZ spokesman Richard Freeman clicked his tongue and said *"Mmmmmm I bet they are!"* The newspaper report went on to announce that *"Police have come up with a plan to track down and catch the elusive big cat, which many believe stalks the county."*

However, when you actually read the newspaper piece in question, it is difficult to discern any radical new policies.

They interviewed Mark Robson - one of the county police's wildlife officers. He is quoted as saying *"We basically arrange for statements to be taken from people to see if they are credible and to see what they have seen. Within a very short period of time we*

would have taken steps to call people in. What we don't want to do is to be caught out and have the public put at risk."

However this is what every wildlife officer in the country does, and has done for many years. Is this a case of a newspaper having to make up an interesting story just to compete for a more interesting one taking place just over the border. It looks that way to us.

- Shropshire

The reason that we are the Centre for Fortean Zoology, rather than the Centre for Cryptozoology is that, from a young age all the core members of the Faculty realized that the universal works far more in tune to the concepts outlined by Charlie Fort nearly a century ago, than it does to the more orthodox ways suggested by modern science. Forteanism has long noted that phenomena happen in waves. We believe that the apparent militancy amongst the British ABC population is one of these waves. For years there have been reports of big cats in the British countryside. Yes, occasionally, some of them have been accused of violent acts towards people, livestock, or even Range Rovers, but never so much as in the last three months.

The Shropshire Star on November 26, 2002 reported a gruesome incident where a car was attacked near Ludlow. The owners of the car, and indeed the police, believed that the blood, which had been found on a Rover 400, which had been "trashed" overnight was that of a big cat. A domestic moggy belonging to the owner had also disappeared. The car's wings were dented and chewed, a plastic feature running along the bumper was ripped off and the bumper and mudflaps were also chewed. However, forensic tests proved that the blood was from a domestic dog. Why the dog had attacked a perfectly innocent Rover 400 remains a mystery, although

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the Lexilink between doggies and the Rover is an irresistible one. It just shows that in the same way that Arab extremists are blamed for everything and anything that goes wrong in the big wide world, in middle England the latest bugbear or scapegoat is the mysterious black cat.

• Scotland

Friday 13th December was indeed an ill-fated day for a lynx, which escaped from a wildlife park in Scotland. After several weeks on the run it was recaptured. It had escaped from Kirkcudbright Wildlife Park in Dumfries and Galloway on November 25. It is interesting to note how quickly it was recaptured when one considers the recent controversy about alleged lynx reintroductions, both illegal and legal in Scotland. Wildlife park officials believe the lynx stayed in the local area during its period of freedom.

However the *Glasgow Herald* announced on Boxing Day that *"Police officers reported they may have seen a 3ft tall animal with a dark coat, piercing yellow eyes, and a long black tail on waste ground near the railway line in Ardrossan, after they responded to calls from residents."* Unlike their counterparts in England and Wales, Ardrossan's finest responded to the situation without any actions, which could lead them, are to be accused of over-reacting. A few hours after the alerts Ardrossan police station reported that they had received no more sightings and were not pursuing the matter.

George Redpath, 58, a former Police Officer, said: *"While there have been no more reports about the animal seen at Ardrossan that is not unusual. From the screeching sounds, it may have been a female puma looking for a mate. It is the only cat, which screams. The territory*

may be as much as 20 square miles, so if the animal was disturbed it could have moved away very quickly to lie up."

However it didn't take long for the Scottish newspapers to begin to demonise the poor creature. Only 24 hours later *The Scottish Herald* was describing the *"big cat that terrified residents of a coastal town"*. They were referring to the same reports, but now the timid puma had been transmogrified into a ravening daemon. There are times that I am not proud to be a journalist.

• Cornwall

Undoubtedly the funniest ABC report of the year appeared in the *Western Morning News* on Boxing Day, when the RSPCA announced their list of the top-ten funniest calls of the year. Apparently an unnamed woman on Bodmin Moor had telephoned them in a panic. She claimed that the beast of Bodmin was laying siege to her house. She claimed that she was trapped indoors because a black cat-like creature had been crouching on her doorstep for 24 hours. The skulking beast turned out to be a delivery of phone directories in a black plastic bag.

UNITED STATES

Unlike the United Kingdom, our cousins across the 'herring pond' have several species of large felid living in various parts of the country.

Of particular interest to cryptozoologists, however, are sightings of animals, which do not seem to refer to any known species.

• TEXAS

Our Texas Correspondent, Chester Moore Jr is a fine naturalist, and writes a column for a

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newspaper in Port Arthur. On Thursday, November 21, he reported on a series of big cat sightings in the area. In November there were a number of sightings of both pumas and "black panthers". Chester wrote:

"Paul Hampton of Nederland reported two occurrences at a golf course in Beaumont. 'About two years ago, my golfing buddy and I had just teed off number 11 hole when we saw a small cat crossing the fairway. My first impression was that of a large house cat, but the unusual colour of the animal told me no way. It was not black, but a very deep, dark brown,' Hampton said. 'I saw no tail but Kelly said he saw a long tail tucked between the legs. It did not run across, but sort of ambled along as if it were used to seeing people,' he added

The second sighting occurred earlier this year.

'We were in the parking lot loading our golf bags on the carts. My partner Kelly spotted the animal crossing the entrance road to the course and alerted me. This animal was again very dark coloured but larger than the first sighting. I would say it was about three feet long and had a tail about the same length, low slung, and could have weighed between forty to sixty pounds. Again, it crossed the road at a leisurely pace. I have talked to at least two other golfers that have spotted animals of this description,' Hampton said."

Unlike many of his British counterparts, who would no doubt, have made the most ridiculous suggestions as to these animals identity, Chester is very matter-of-fact. Despite the fact that many zoologists believe that pumas are extinct in this part of Texas, Chester is convinced that they are not. He has seen them, and knows that they still exist. However, he is faced with the same dilemma that British

ABC researchers have to deal with. There ain't no such thing as a black puma. So what are the Panthers reported in the district? Chester has two suggestions. He hypothesises that many of them are darker colour variations of a Puma, and also suggests that the Jaguarundi – another cat species may be more common than has otherwise been thought. Chester's groundbreaking work in identifying a population of the red wolf - long thought extinct in Texas - has given zoologists much cause for thought. It would be an unwise man who would ignore the research of this remarkable man.

• GEORGIA

The *Daily Herald* (Henry County, GA), on November 9th, 2002 reported a sighting of a large felid in Clayton County. Paddy Sharma and her family saw the big cat while they were eating breakfast. She grabbed a video camera so she could use the zoom lens to get a better look at the animal, and apparently the resulting video *"showed a feline that may stand about 3-foot 6-inches at the shoulder and was more than five feet long. Its fur was orange or tan, with a long striped tail and white fur around its mouth and chest. It also left tracks in the mud in the Sharmas' yard that were three to four inches in diameter and indicated a very long stride."* However, as always seems to be the case, neither the photographs of the pugmarks or stills from the video have reached the CFZ.

"Originally I thought maybe it was a lynx," said Clayton County Animal Control Capt. Toni Tidwell. However the fact that the animal had a long, striped tail, and also the fact that lynx are not found in Georgia, puts a bit of a kibosh on this suggestion. The bobcat, *is*, however found in the state, but it too has no tail. Tidwell made a cursory search of the Internet where she found Web sites about breeds like the Desert Lynx. Also known as the Highland Lynx these are

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introgressive hybrids between bobcats and domestic cats. However, as far as the CFZ are able to ascertain, these too are blessed with short tails. Neither bobcats nor any hybrid of the species would reach anything like the size described by Paddy Sharma.

However the story does not end here. Five days later WSB-TV News from Atlanta, Georgia carried a particularly interesting news item. The amusingly named Alan Wang of Channel 2 Action News announced that some of the state's top animal experts were trying to identify a large cat-like creature caught on videotape. This is presumably the same tape shot by Paddy Sharma. However it seemed as though that the animal has been seen on at least one other occasion in the same neighbourhood. What is particularly interesting are the interpretations by various experts who have apparently viewed the tape:

- After viewing the videotape, Dwight Lawson, who oversees the carnivores at Zoo Atlanta, believes it's a caracal, the largest of the small variety of African wildcats. "If you look at the facial markings when you get a profile, you see the stripes and the white on the side of the head. It's probably 35 to 50 pounds -something in that range," he said, adding that it should not prove a threat to humans, but small rodents, reptiles and birds.
- Department of Natural Resources biologist Scott Frazier says he thinks the cat's bigger and more dangerous. "Maybe 80 to 100 pounds -- something in that range," he said.

He then went on to contradict himself, claiming that that it was a hybrid between a tiger and a lion which can grow up to 500 pounds in weight. The CFZ are often accused of cynicism, but it is difficult not to be cynical when two such eminent

members of the community can interpret the same piece of videotape in such radically different ways. We wait with baited breath to see what will happen next.

AUSTRALIA

The *Eyre Peninsula Tribune* on Wednesday, 20 November 2002 reported the appearance of a giant black cat in the vicinity of Mangalo in South Australia. Two farmers Tony King and Lachlan Caddy are sure that they have encountered a giant cat. Tony said the cat had five sheep huddled together and was pacing around them in decreasing circles as if it was about ready to attack one. *"It was pacing around them and then it must have heard Lachlan's car pull up and it started to take off,"* Tony said. They described an animal at least as high as the sheep that it was stalking and which was jet-black. The two farmers saw the mysterious creature on at least two occasions in early November.

Tony said he hung a dead kangaroo from a tree with chains to make it nearly impossible for foxes to take it away, but this was ripped from the chains when he went back to check on it. Lachlan and Tony found prints, which were believed to be from the cat, and took plaster casts of them. *"Unfortunately the casts didn't turn out all that well because the prints were in a quite sandy area and had lost most of their form when the casts were taken."* Needless to say the photographs of the plaster casts didn't reach as far as the CFZ office, although they did get to the South Australian Museum in Adelaide where Discovery Centre Supervisor Mike Gemmell said: *"There's really nothing to suggest it's a cat or it isn't from the casts"*. There really is nothing else one can say to that.

Also in Oz towards the end of last year there were reports that a panther had been shot near

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Healesville, east of Melbourne. As far as we know, this incident never made the transition from rumour to news.

The Herald Sun (Melbourne) 13.12.02 reported the resurgence of another semi-legendary Australian big cat. Farmer Ron Jones claims that the legendary big cat that has eluded hunters and for photographers for 50 years killed and partially ate a heifer on his South Gippsland farm. *"I've seen about a dozen of them now . . . when they're sitting on their backsides they're about three foot six from the ground to the top of the head,"* he told ABC radio - providing yet another lexilink for those impressed by such things. *"When they take off they sort of go in big loping bounds. They cover about 20 feet every bound -- they're about eight feet, roughly, from the tip of their nose to the end of their tail."*

Having shot at the mystery beast several times, Mr Jones said it was unmistakably feline. *"It's definitely a cat the way it moves,"* he said.

CANADA (New Brunswick)

The *New Brunswick Telegraph Journal* reported at the end of 2002 that a mysterious large black cat had been seen in the Miramichi area. *"Barry Campbell is convinced that the sleek, black animal he saw lurking around his property was an eastern black panther. Whether it was or not is yet to be proven, since the animals are extremely rare in New Brunswick so rare they're widely believed to be extinct and passed on into the world of myth."*

There's so much wrong with that statement that it is very difficult to know where to begin. Panthers, 'as any fule kno', are the melanistic form of the leopard - a species not found in North America. The Eastern puma, a creature

regarded by many as extinct, but by some cryptozoologists as an animal desperately clawing its way back from the brink is a subspecies which, as reported elsewhere in this section of the magazine does not exhibit any black colour morphs.

Barry and his brother Peter had been going back to work after lunch when they saw something dark sauntering along in the distance. *"I just saw a black cougar,"* Campbell said. *"It was a big black cat with a big, long tail. My brother spotted it and we watched it for about 10 or 15 minutes",* Campbell said. *"It was walking across the field at the top by the woods."*

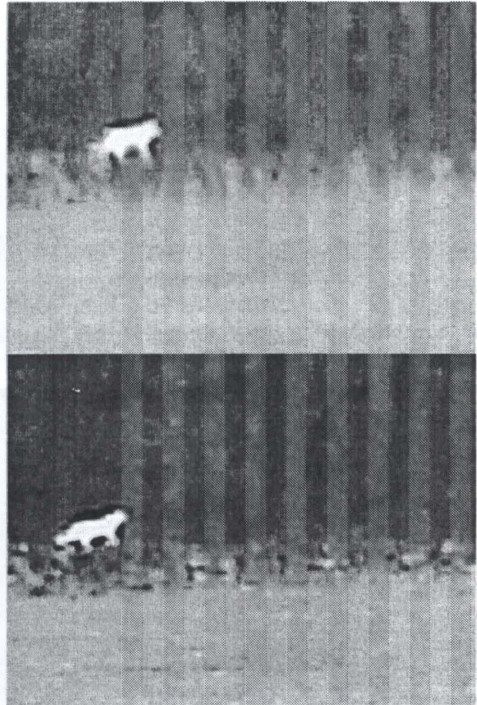
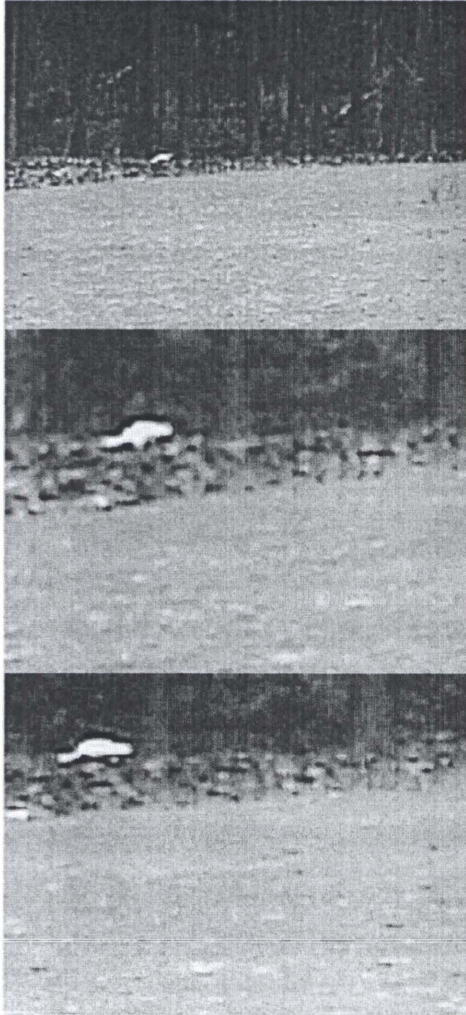
According to the original newspaper report Campbell used the scope on his rifle to watch the animal as it continued to stroll along to his neighbour's land. This does make one wonder why Campbell was carrying a rifle during his lunch break. Perhaps it is better not to ask. Brian Hatch, regional director for the Miramichi Department of Natural Resources and Energy (DNRE), says Campbell reported the sighting that day. *"He mentioned the sighting so the rangers asked him to fill out a form, The eastern panther is considered endangered and may be extinct, so we have a system where we do follow-up on reports."*

WHITE CAT FEVER

Just after Christmas various Scottish newspapers reported sightings of what was claimed to be an albino big cat. John Smith and his wife Violet spotted the beast in a field near their home at Cardrona, Peeblesshire. John was lucky enough to be able to film the creature, and the stills reproduced here were taken from the footage. Experts are divided as to what this video shows. Whereas some people are claiming that this piece of film shows an albino puma - an animal, which as far as we're aware has never, been reported before - others are less certain. The CFZ have

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not been able to see the original film footage but zoologist Richard Freeman, has suggested that it probably shows an Arctic fox, or even more prosaically a domestic dog of a breed a similar to the Sammoied.



Those who claim that it shows an albino puma, assert this as supportive evidence that the gene pool of British pumadom is becoming seriously depleted and is therefore producing striking anomalies.

The CFZ do not wish to comment further until we have seen the film for ourselves. Mark Fraser assures us that the film (which he has only seen on a single occasion) is far more impressive than the stills reproduced here.

Mark is a researcher for whom we have the greatest respect, and therefore, despite our better judgment, we have a sneaking suspicion that this mystery may eventually bear fruit.

We are always looking for more news items and for people willing to become CFZ Regional Representatives. If you fancy taking on the onerous task then feel free to contact Jon at the editorial address

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CAT CARCASSE?

Again we are indebted to Mark Fraser for the following story. He forwarded on this e-mail:

Hi Mark,

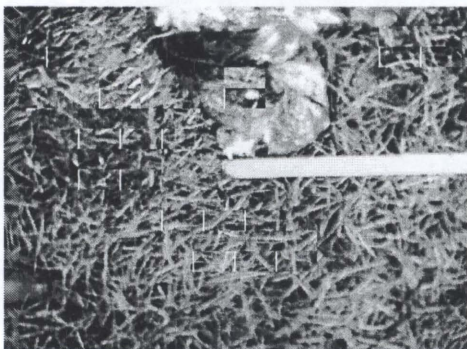
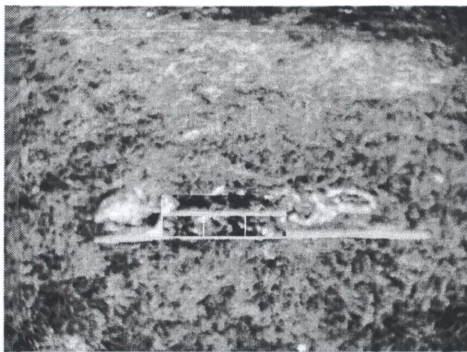
I hope you don't mind my sending you some photographs? They are quite gruesome, I'm afraid. My boyfriend found this corpse where he is working and thought it could be a big cat. He has lain a metre stick alongside the body as a size comparison. Personally, I'm not sure about the teeth, but I'm no expert. He says the coat has spots on it but I find it difficult to discern the markings. One of his colleagues also believes it to be a cat - but 'not a moggy', as he put it.

I apologise if I am wasting your time, but we have, in the past, had experience of big cats and are extremely interested in these wonderful creatures. We love visiting your site, it is excellent, please keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully,

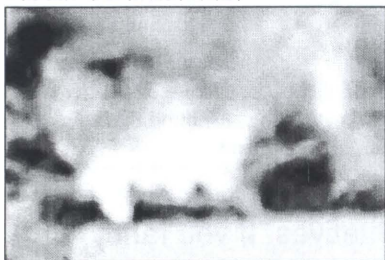
Lizzie

Having examined the pictures closely, Richard Freeman concludes that although the double crowned teeth are indicative that the animal was a carnivore, the corpse is far too decomposed for him to be able to give a definitive identification.



INSERT (LEFT)

Here you can see a pointed canine and either a molar or premolar, which has a double crown. These are only found in the order *carnivora*.



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BIGFOOT: ALIVE AND KICKING

"Bigfoot is dead!" screamed newspapers across the globe in December of 2002. The story went something like this: In August 1958, huge footprints were found in the forests of Humboldt County, California, by bulldozer operator Jerry Crew, who worked for a man named Ray L. Wallace.

The story reached the Humboldt Times newspaper, which reported the details of Crew's discovery in a front-page feature. Bigfoot, North America's legendary ape-man, was officially born. In a situation that has generated a veritable mountain of controversy, however, the family of Ray L. Wallace now says that Wallace himself was responsible for creating the footprints

and, later, other "evidence" (such as faked photographs and film footage) that kept the legend alive for more than forty years.

The media has been largely content to accept the statement of the Wallace family without criticism. Monster-hunters scoff, however, and note that reports of giant, hairy creatures roaming the forests of North America can be found in Native American Indian legends that date back centuries. Is Bigfoot really dead? Does this mark the end of the road for the hairy beast and perhaps even the wider discipline of cryptozoology? Hardly. A perusal of data collated by myself shows that, in reality, the exact opposite is the case and interest in cryptozoology and Bigfoot in the USA is, today, at a very welcome high – as indeed are sightings of the mysterious and elusive beasts. Consider the following – all of which has surfaced in the last two months.

On 23 October 2002, the Mohave Daily News of Bullhead City, Arizona, published a story concerning the sighting of an "ape-like creature" seen in the Bullhead area crossing Arizona's Highway 95. "We are not fanatics that wear aluminium hats or anything like that," said Brad Mortensen, an investigator for the Bigfoot Field Research Organization that investigated the report. Mortensen (who had his own encounter in 1997 at Rice Lake, Wisconsin) further advised the newspaper that 14 such reports had been filed with the BFRO from Arizona.

One week later, the Dallas-Fort Worth Star Telegram newspaper published a major feature on the work of the Dallas-based Texas Bigfoot Research Centre. As the newspaper revealed, the search for the Texas equivalent of America's most famous man-beast began in earnest in the late 1960s, after several sightings of large ape-like creatures were made in Fouke,

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Arkansas, 15 miles southeast of Texarkana (there have, however, been sporadic reports of similar animals seen in decades gone by – such as the tale of the Wild Woman of the Navidad as related in the last issue of this magazine). And it was these accounts that led to the production of the 1972 docu-drama *The Legend of Boggy Creek*.

The newspaper also revealed the intriguing fact that sightings of Bigfoot-style beasts were still reaching the TBRC on a regular basis. In the spring of 2000, it was stated that a couple driving between Lufkin and Longview reported seeing an 8-foot tall auburn-colored creature walking out of the nearby woods.

Late autumn 2001 saw a report surface from the Marshall area of the state of a seven-foot-tall ape-like animal carrying the hindquarter of a deer.

And in the summer of 2002 the latest of several reports from the Pat Mayse Lake area north of Paris, Texas, surfaced when “a creature similar to a gorilla” was witnessed at the edge of a property that backed onto a nearby forest.

Twenty-four hours after the above-story was published, the *USA Today* newspaper published its own, feature-length piece on Bigfoot and those for whom pursuit of the creature is a passion.

“I’ve gone from being a raving skeptic to being curiously receptive,” said Robert Benson, director of the Centre for Bioacoustics in Texas and who appears in a new documentary, *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science* (that airs in January on the Discovery Channel), critiquing alleged audiotapes of “Bigfoot calls.”

USA Today also cited the testimony of Jeff Meldrum, associate professor of anatomy and anthropology at Idaho State University.

Once a skeptic, Meldrum was in Washington State in 1996 when he viewed literally dozens of large, anomalous footprints and “*felt the hair stand up on my neck.*”

The producer of the documentary, Doug Hajicek, is reluctant to give away too many of the show’s revelations before it airs, but he does state: *“I’ll tell you why this fascinates people. We’re the only bipeds here. Imagine the primordial fear a competing biped species produces.”*

And still the controversy continues: two weeks ago I was given details of a report of a Bigfoot-like creature seen in 2000 in the town of Nederland, Texas, where I now live.

Then only seven days ago I wrote an article for the Wolverhampton, *Express & Star* newspaper on the so-called Man-Monkey – a spectral ape-man seen near the Midlands town of Ranton in the late 1800’s.

What was most intriguing was the fact that the latter article brought forth two accounts from people who claim to have seen similar animals in the region today.

I hope to be able to provide details for you of all of these cases in the next issue of *Animals & Men*.

But as the above-reports and newspaper features make abundantly clear, despite the breaking and on-going controversy surrounding the Ray L. Wallace affair, Bigfoot (and interest in the beast) continues to live on.

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creature feature



THE CFZ INVESTIGATES

Expedition Report: BHM Reports in Northumberland

THE HUNT FOR THE BOLAM “BEAST”

A PRELIMINARY REPORT.

17-21st January 2003

NOTE: This is an extension of the preliminary report that we placed on our website within days of our return from Northumberland. We will be receiving more photographs and sketch maps over the next days and weeks, and will also have finished transcribing the witness interview tapes.

This is only the beginning of what is planned to be a year long investigation into the current flap of British BHM Phenomena, and the results will eventually be published in book form either towards the end of this year, or the beginning of 2004.

There are references to the death of Ray Wallace, and to the subsequent media furore in several parts of this magazine. It is the subject of Nick Redfern's column, several news items and took Wallace's obituary itself. As Nick reports, newspapers across the world claimed that Bigfoot was dead. It is almost as if the global spirit of 'Bigfoot' decided to stick two fingers up at the world media, and proclaim its continued existence in as dramatic a manner as possible!

The Centre for Fortean Zoology has long been interested in British BHM reports. Over the years we have collected a fair amount of data on the subject, and have been vaguely meaning to do something about it for a long time. Within days of the announcement of Wallace's death, the first reports of what was to become the biggest Flap of BHM report in British history started to arrive at CFZ HQ. For various logistical and social reasons, the CFZ, like many other organisations, goes into standby mode over what is euphemistically known as the festive season.

Richard usually goes back to the Midlands for a fortnight to visit his family, John and Graham have time off, leaving Jon, Lisa and the CFZ dog to man the offices. Usually very little happens at this time of year, and there is next to nothing to

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report when the CFZ posse reconvenes early in the New Year.

On this occasion, however there was a whole dossier of information ready for them on their return, and it did not take any persuading at all for the CFZ crew to agree - in principle - to an expedition up to one of the BHM hot spots some time in the early spring. The subject of this planned expedition was the main item on the agenda of the first CFZ board meeting of the year.

However, even as we spoke and made plans for a planned trip in March, a handful of new sightings from the Bolam Lake area of Northumberland arrived in our email in-box. When faced with an opportune like this, there was only one thing we could do. We made plans for an almost immediate expedition to Northumberland, to investigate the sightings for ourselves.

We liaised with Geoff Lincoln, an absolutely invaluable researcher. We gave him our planned arrival time, and asked him up to see if any of the eyewitnesses would be prepared to speak to us. Much to our delight five out of six were. I think it should be noted, here, that the 6th is a soldier and with the burgeoning situation in the Middle East spiraling rapidly out of control, it would be completely unreasonable to expect a serving military man to be at the beck and call of four loonies from the CFZ.

Serendipitously, we were able to stay at a house owned by our Co. Durham representative, David Curtis. He and his wife Joanne were absolutely fantastic all the way through our sojourn in the North. The only sad thing about our stay with them, was that Davy had to work most of the time and was not able to join us during most of our adventures.



Geoff Lincoln shows the CFZ Team the location of the first sighting

After a series of fairly dull misadventures, we met Geoff Lincoln, and Dr Gail-Nina Anderson (a member of the CFZ Board of Consultants), and we made our way in convoy to Bolam Lake itself. It would be nice to say that we were overwhelmed with a spooky feeling, or that the *genius locii* of the location was in some way redolent of Fortean freakiness. But it wasn't. It was just what one would expect from a heavily wooded country park in the North of England in the middle of January - cold, wet and grey.

Geoff showed us three of the locations where these things had been reported. We carried out a thorough series of photographic mapping exercises, whilst Jon stayed back at the main car-park and did his best to fend off the incessant inquiries from the local press. Just after lunchtime a TV crew from Tyne-Tees Television turned up and filmed interviews with the investigation team. It was only after they had gone that we realised that something rather strange was happening.

Although we had tested all of our electronic equipment the night before, charged up batteries where necessary, and put new batteries in all of the equipment which needed them, practically

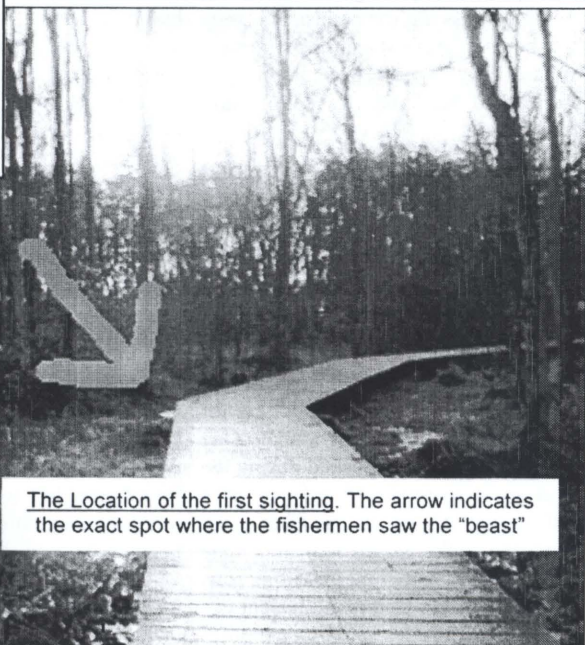
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The earliest accounts that we were able to uncover were from a group of three fishermen who had seen the creature about five years ago. "Neil", one of the fishermen said:

"Me and my friends were walking back from fishing along this old wooden pathway.

I turned round, and there was this big figure. It must have been 10 feet away from us.

It was big built, and I remember seeing its eyes shining - sparkling - in the moonlight. It was easily 7 ft in height. It was standing up off the walkway down and the marshy area.



The Location of the first sighting. The arrow indicates the exact spot where the fishermen saw the "beast"

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without exception all of our equipment failed. The laptop, for example, has a battery, which usually lasts between 20 and 35 minutes. It lasted just three minutes before conking out. Admittedly, Jon received an enormous number of telephone calls during our stay at the Lake, but not anywhere near enough to justify the fact that he had to change handsets four times in as many hours. The batteries in both Geoff's and our tape recorders also failed. It seemed certain that there was some strange electromagnetic phenomenon at work here.

Late afternoon we drove to a local pub where we met our first witnesses. Like all the other people we were to meet over the next few days they requested anonymity, and therefore in accordance with our strict confidentiality policy, we have respected this. Naomi, and her son had been visiting Bolam Lake only a few days before. Not believing any of the reports which had appeared in the local media, they were both appalled and frightened when - whilst walking across the car park itself - they had seen a huge creature standing motionless in the woods. They described experiencing a intense feeling of fear and trepidation, and rapidly left the area.

They were incredibly co-operative, and agreed to come back to the lake with us the next day to stage a reconstruction similar to those done on the BBC television programme *Crimewatch*.

Jon had a call time of 5.30 the next morning, and a taxi took him to a lay-by 500 yards up the road from the Bolam Lake car-park, where he did a two and a half minute interview for the BBC Radio 4 Today programme. One thing of great importance happened during the half-hour or so he spent shivering by the side of the road waiting to speak to 'the Beeb'. Just before dawn the rooks, which live in a huge colony in the woods, started the appalling row, which is presumably the Corvid equivalent of

the dawn chorus. Suddenly the noise stopped. Jon heard a brief succession of booming noises - like a heavily amplified heartbeat from a *Pink Floyd* record - before the rooks started up again. It is unclear whether these noises came from the vicinity of the lake itself or were made by the incredibly Heath-Robinsonesque set-up of satellite dishes, and recording equipment which was loaded in the back of, and on top of the BBC man's car.

During the taxi journey back to Seaham the driver remarked on the peculiar behaviour of the rooks, and said that although he was a country man himself and had spent his whole life living in this area he had never heard anything quite like it.

No sooner had Jon arrived back at base, than it was time for the entire C F Z expeditionary force to drive to the outskirts of Newcastle where, we met Geoff and a second witness in a cafe attached to a garden centre. The witness, Neil, had been fishing at Bolam Lake one night four or five years previously. Together with two companions he had been making his way back to the car-park when they encountered a huge, dark man shaped object about 7-8 ft in height with what he described as sparkling eyes. The three fishermen did not stop to investigate but ran back to the car. However, this was by no means the only encounter that Neil had got to report to us. Together with one of his companions from the first adventure he had again been night fishing at Bolam Lake during the summer of 2002. They had been camped out on this occasion, and had heard noises, which they assumed were from an enormous animal moving around in the bushes outside their camp. Deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, they decided not to investigate, but when they broke camp the next morning they found that fish in a bait tin had been taken, and there were signs that something very large had been moving around the vicinity of their camp.

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Possibly the most astounding story that he had to recount had taken place a couple of summers before our visit. He had been in the woods at the opposite side of the Lake with his girlfriend. They had been making love, when his girlfriend told him that she could see what she thought was a man in a monkey suit watching their sexual adventures intently from behind a bush. Neil unsurprisingly looked around the area but could find nothing.

We then continued to the lake. Neil had been amazingly co-operative, and had, like Naomi, agreed to stage a reconstruction with us. At the lake we liaised with the team from *Twilight Worlds* and began a series of exercises, which would take up the rest of the day. Geoff had noted, the previous week, a series of apparently artificial tree formations similar to those "Bigfoot Teepees" noted by researchers in the United States.

Together with a team from *Twilight Worlds*, Geoff and Graham went off to map these formations and make a photographic record. They also took with them a *Twilight Worlds* member trained in using their EMF meter, together with a dowser. After our electrical mishaps of the previous day, we wanted to find out whether there were, indeed, any abnormal EMF fields in the area. Neither investigator found any unusual readings.

Our next task was to stage a reconstruction of Naomi's sighting. Again a full photographic and video record was made, and EMF readings were also taken. Again no unusual readings were made either by the EMF meter or the dowser. We then repeated the exercise with Neil and reconstructed his first sighting.

At about half-past four, one of the members of *Twilight Worlds* reported seeing something large, human shaped and amorphous in the woods directly in front of the car park.



Geoff Lincoln shows the CFZ team some of the tepee-like formations found in the woods

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As the dusk gathered at about 5 o'clock, Jon again heard the raucous noise of the rooks that he had reported. just before dawn. Suddenly, once again, they fell silent and one of the *Twilight Worlds* members shouted that she could hear something large moving around amongst the undergrowth. Jon ordered all of the car drivers present to switch on their headlights and to put them on to full beam. He did not hear any noise in the undergrowth although other people present did. Eight people were watching the woods and five of them, including Jon saw an enormous man shaped object run from right to left, disappear, and then a few moments later run back again.

When the expedition returned on Monday, they conducted experiments to find out exactly how far away the creature - if it was a creature - was from the excited onlookers. Using Richard Freeman as a model, Jon made a fairly accurate estimate that the creature had been a hundred and 34 feet away from him at the time of his sighting. He also estimated that the creature had run along a distance of between 12 and 18 feet.

About five minutes after his sighting, he wandered across the car-park to the location when Naomi had reported seeing the creature. There, he too, felt a sensation of intense fear and quickly returned to his companions.

After an incident like that, anything else would have been an anti-climax. However, Geoff Lincoln took the CFZ team to interview two further witnesses. The first was a young man living in the suburbs of Newcastle. Geoff and Richard visited him at his home and he told of his encounter with an enormous man shaped being next to a hollow tree in the woods, some months previously. The incident had taken place whilst he had been walking his dog. He had been so frightened by his experience that he refused to ever go near the lake again.

Finally we went to another pub where we met another man called Neil. He had been with the first Neil at the time of his initial sighting.

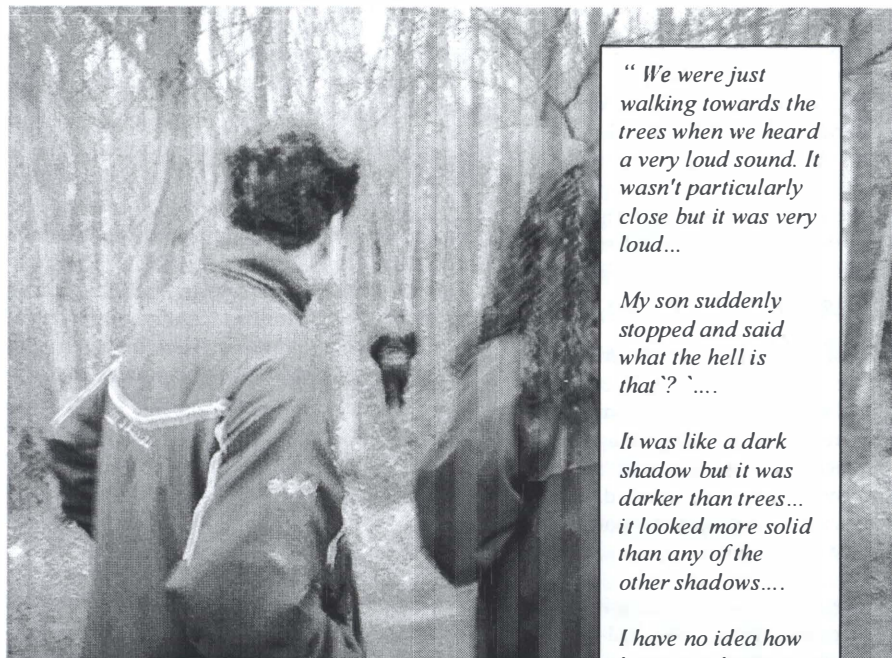


Richard sets a sand-trap for footprints; unfortunately it was unsuccessful



another witness reported his sighting near a hollow tree

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" We were just walking towards the trees when we heard a very loud sound. It wasn't particularly close but it was very loud...

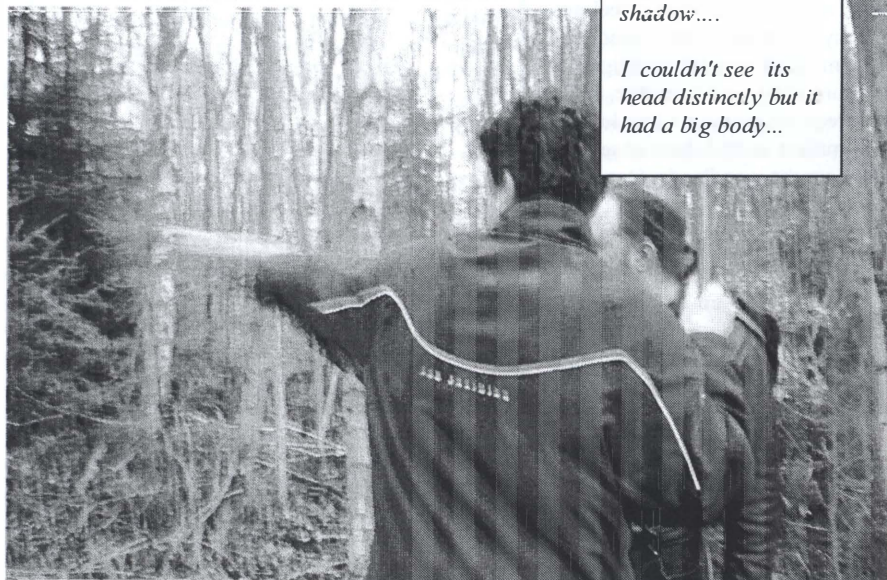
My son suddenly stopped and said what the hell is that? `....

It was like a dark shadow but it was darker than trees... it looked more solid than any of the other shadows....

I have no idea how big it was but it was big a big big shadow....

I couldn't see its head distinctly but it had a big body...

'NAOMI' RECONSTRUCTS HER SIGHTING



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We were all impressed by his sincerity and by the way that he corroborated his friends' testimony in what seemed to us, at least, to be a very natural and uncontrived manner. After a day off we returned to the lake on Monday morning. We carried out a thorough photographic survey of the final two sighting locations and the aforementioned experiments to ascertain - as far as is possible - the size of the thing that had been seen on Saturday night, and its distance from the eyewitnesses.

As the EMF scans had been remarkably unsuccessful, we tried to scan the area for magnetic anomalies using a pocket compass. Mike Hallowell registered a strange magnetic anomaly at the location of the fisherman's first sighting. However, it must be reported, that when the team tried to replicate this later in the day, they were unsuccessful.

That evening, we interviewed a final witness. A woman in her late Fifties, who had been visiting the lake about five years before with her son who was then 11 years old. Like Naomi, and Jon, she reported intense feelings of - not exactly hostility, but what she interpreted as a message not to investigate a peculiar tree formation any further. She discussed these tree formations at some length. She had been surprised to find them at several locations throughout the woodlands. Our work finished we returned home.

We would like to thank the management, the staff and the members of the Dawdon Miner's Welfare Club from the bottom of our hearts. They made us welcome, were friendly and kind, and even gave us gifts of food and allowed us to make use of their telephone for the purposes of carrying out radio interviews. There is a little bit of the corner of the collective heart of the CFZ, which will be forever Dawdon.

Bolam Lake in Northumberland is not the only place in the United Kingdom where BHM phenomena have been reported over the last few months:

CANNOCK CHASE, **STAFFORDSHIRE**

There at least five reports from the last 12 months. This is one of the few places in Britain, where such reports have occurred regularly for the last century.

FRISTON PARK, SUSSEX

An ex-soldier now working for the Forestry Commission had a Sighting last summer. He hints some of his colleagues may also have seen it. There are pieces of circumstantial evidence surrounding these reports, which tie in closely with Bigfoot reports in the US

SHERWOOD FOREST, **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

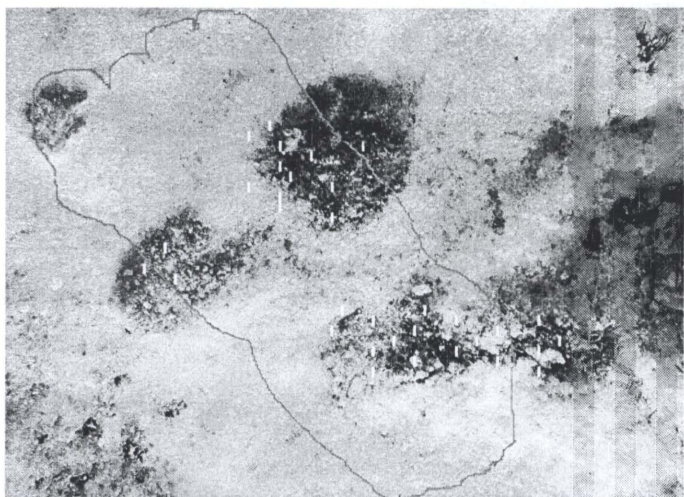
A sighting last year sparked several historical accounts, and kick-started an entire Flap. Man Beasts have been reported in this vicinity for centuries. One of the most famous was known as Robin of the Wood. Sounds familiar?

LONGRIDGE FELL, **LANCASHIRE**

The most recently announced series of reports. Apparently a woman living in the vicinity reports having been 'in contact' on some level with several of these creatures for some time. Longridge Fell is also the site for encounters with two other famous British monsters - a dragon and the notorious Dun Cow.

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Photographic Evidence



On Saturday 11th January, our friend and colleague Mike Hallowell and his Colleagues from the *Twilight Worlds* research group of South Tyneside, who collaborated with us on our investigations visited Bolam lake. There was snow on the ground and in the snow they found a number of footprints. One of them appeared to be an immense naked foot showing distinct imprints of five toes. When we ran this image through the 'emboss' feature on Adobe Photoshop, the resulting image (which doesn't reproduce satisfactorily in monochrome) implies that a fair amount of pressure was used to make these 'footprints'.

Whilst they were at the lake, the *Twilight Worlds* team also collected some hair samples, which are being sent to four separate laboratories in three different countries for analysis. We will be publishing the results of all our findings as and when they come in.

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The Other two `footprint` photographs taken by *Twilight Worlds*



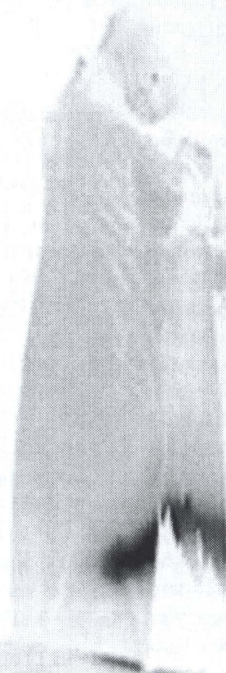
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ODD-BODIES

AN INVESTIGATION INTO A SELECTION OF MONSTERS
TRIGGERED BY THE COSMIC MECHANISM
A BOOK BY NEIL ARNOLD

*"...A MENAGERIE OF MONSTERS BOTH WELL KNOWN
AND OBSCURE, A HOPPING, SLITHERING, CRAWLING,
FLAPPING, GIBBERING, DROOLING BOX OF FORTEAN
DELIGHTS!"*

RICHARD FREEMAN, *Animals & Men*



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**creature
feature**

THE CFZ INVESTIGATES



Who killed Skippy?

The true story of the Loftus
Wallaby slasher

by Jonathan Downes

In 1978 there were a series of grisly events at Newquay Zoo in northern Cornwall. During the long, hot summer a number of animals were attacked and killed. These included a pair of Bennett's or Red Necked Wallabies who were mutilated in a manner reminiscent of some of the so-called victims of animal mutilation syndrome, which have been reported, especially in the United States, over the years. For many years this had been the best-documented British animal mutilation case. I became involved with the Newquay Zoo case in the early 1990's when I was investigating reports of the so-called *Beast of Bodmin*. During my investigations I spoke to a policeman who, it turned out, had been the officer in charge of the police investigation into the 1978 killings. He told me that I should really talk to a Mr Marshall who had been the curator, and I believe the owner of Newquay Zoo at the time. I spoke at length to him on the subject of the killings and eventually, through the kind offices of my friend Joan Amos (who died in 2001), obtained the police and veterinary reports on the killings, together with the report from the UFO investigator who had spent some weeks investigating the case at the time.

The full result of the CFZ investigation into the case, together with some associated events including what sounds suspiciously like an outbreak of Lycanthropy in the Cornish village of St Columb Major can be found in my book

The Owlman and Others (CFZ, Exeter, 1997), (Domra, Corby, 1998), (CFZ, Exeter 2002). The case still attracts some attention, even twenty four years after the unfortunate wallabies met their end.

Whoever, or whatever, it was that killed the Newquay wallabies would never have dreamed that the case would still be attracting comment so many years later. However, it is a case that has always intrigued me, and I have always wanted to get to the bottom of it.

In June 2002 the following news story turned up in my e-mail inbox:

Ananova: Two wallabies have been found beheaded at an animal sanctuary.

Owner Clifford Spedding has suggested the attacks may be linked to devil worshipping as the heads were taken away. Last week someone took rare Shell ducks, native to Australia, from his sanctuary near Loftus, Cleveland, which he has run for more than 20 years. Later that week he discovered someone had tried to set his voluntary sanctuary ablaze.

Police have launched an investigation into the attacks and say the crimes are linked. Mr Spedding, 42, said: "I tried to make myself believe that an animal was responsible but I knew it was not. It just wouldn't have been so bad if a dog did it. It could be some kind of devil worship, I just don't know, maybe they drink the animals' blood," he said. And in the last fortnight sheep were attacked and killed with an axe at a farm in nearby Guisborough, he said.

Earlier, 90 pigeons perished in a blaze at a racing club in Liverton Mines, East Cleveland. Pc Eddie O'Hara said: "Mr Spedding is a popular lad in the community and everyone knows the work that he does. He is totally devastated."

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By teatime we had the telephone number of Clifford Spedding, the owner of the Hope Animal Sanctuary, and the numbers for the vet and for PC O'Hara, the officer investigating the case.

The next day Richard telephoned all three of them.

RICHARD FREEMAN: When I contacted Cliff Spedding I got the impression that I was talking to an elderly man. He seemed highly upset by the events and confused as to their nature. He told me that one wallaby had been found dead with no apparent cause. The other was beheaded and totally drained of blood. Upon my enquiries he related that despite the decapitation there was no blood on the ground or in the body. A friend of his from the neighbouring village had said that there were Satanic rituals being carried out in the woods that backed onto the Hope Animal Sanctuary. Cliff seemed to think the killing was occult in nature. He informed me that the first wallaby had been buried and that the second had been taken to a vet's for a post-mortem then frozen. He seemed glad to except our help on the case.

PC O'Hara was a very helpful man. When I contacted him he was also glad of help on the case and would always ring back if he was not in the office at the time of a particular call. He basically related a similar story but told me that the vet had not actually carried out a post mortem and didn't even know what species of wallaby it was! He didn't buy the occult theory and said that nothing worse than a bit of dope smoking had occurred in the woods.

The vet, whose name now escapes me was of no use at all. He did not return my calls and if he could not

identified the wallaby species he couldn't have been much of a vet.

Because of pressure of work, and lack of funding we were unable to do anything else at this juncture and so we continued with our preparations for the investigation into the "monster" of Martin Mere. About a week before we were due to leave for Lancashire I was contacted by a representative from Making Time TV, who were working on a series called *Scream Team*. The premise of the series was that six young people with an interest in such things would be taken around the country and, together with various 'experts' would undertake a series of different investigations into a variety of different 'paranormal' and fortan occurrences. Would I, he asked, like to be one of the 'experts'? If so, what would I like the *Scream Team* to investigate with me?

Much to my joy, Harry from the TV Company, had read *The Owlman and Others* and was interested in having a new look at the Newquay Zoo case. He was immediately interested when I told him that there was a contemporary case, which on the face of it included many apparent similarities with the events in Newquay 24 years before. After a few days of negotiation we agreed in principal to take both us, and the *Scream Team* crew to Cleveland to investigate the case.

During our stay at Martin-Mere my discussions with Harry continued by telephone and a few days after our return a time, a date and a fee was agreed. A day or so later I spoke to my father on the telephone. He asked me whether I had any plans for my birthday on the 22nd August.

"Yes, Dad", I replied mildly embarrassed. "Um..... I'm going to be in North Yorkshire cutting up a dead wallaby".

To his everlasting credit, he took this news completely in his stride. We have known each other, man and boy, for forty three years now,

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and I don't think there is much that I could do anymore that could surprise him. Neither he, or I, had any idea that the events that were to unfold were to be quite so peculiar!

Wednesday, the 21st August 2002, the night before my 43rd birthday I was sitting, with Richard, in the bar of the *Spa Hotel* in Saltburn on Sea, a pretty little seaside town on the coast of North Yorkshire. We were drinking beer and chatting to David "Geordie Dave" Curtis, a semi-legendary figure whose name and exploits will be familiar to readers of my inky fingered scribbles here and elsewhere.

I had only been able to persuade the TV Company to stump up for the expenses for two nights and a day, and I knew that the investigation would take a little longer than that. Would Dave, I asked almost shyly, like to come along with us on Friday for part of the investigation, and could we possibly stay at his house afterwards?

The answer to both questions was soon forthcoming. "*Dear Boy.. is the Pope a catholic??*" he asked.

As, even if we weren't sure about the Pope's religious persuasion, we knew that Dave was what he described as a "Left Footer" we assumed that his answer was a resounding yes.

During the course of the evening I ate a particularly indigestible meal and Richard got chatting to the barman, who, it appeared, knew the owner of the animal sanctuary pretty well.

RICHARD FREEMAN: The barman, whose name I never did find out, told me he had known Cliff for 15 years and he was a nice, genuine bloke. He had no idea why anyone would want to harm his animals.

After dinner Dave drove back to the bosom of his family, I went to bed and Richard went out to explore the pubs of Saltburn with the production team and the six members of the *Scream Team* who were collectively known as "the kids" even though some were older than some of the members of the production crew.

The next morning I woke with a little bit of a hangover and made my way into the breakfast room with Richard. There the "kids" and the crew were waiting for us, and after a hurried repast, I had to address the assembled company, film cameras and all, about the details of the mission ahead.

The "kids" were young, trendy, intelligent and uniformly good looking, as were the crew. I was acutely aware that I am a middle-aged man with a mop of hair, a bushy beard and a walking stick. Although, without any tinge of self-aggrandisement, I am the top of my particular professional tree, and the foremost expert in animal mutilations and fortaean zoology in the UK, and in the worldwide top five, I was surprisingly nervous. I have always been riddled with self-doubt - something that has probably helped me in my quest to see what "lies beyond the next bend in the road" - but never more so than this morning. How was an old git like me going to get along with a handpicked team of the brightest and best of British youth?

It seems that they had been briefed about me in advance because not only did they all wish me "happy birthday" as I limped up to their table, walking stick in hand, but they seemed to know some fairly impressive details about my career to date. In 1998 my credentials as an animal mutilation expert were enhanced when I had carried out an expedition to Puerto Rico, Central Mexico and Florida in search of a grotesque vampiric entity known as *el chupacabra* or the goatsucker. My adventures are chronicled in my book *Only Fools and Goatsuckers* (CFZ, Exeter,

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2000), and it appears that someone at the production company had got hold of a copy because the "kids" (particularly two striking blonde girls; Shayla - an actress who had appeared in my favourite TV Police Drama and Amy) seemed determined to ask me questions about *el chupacabra*.

Sadly, I had to disillusion them from their apparent belief that there was any hope whatsoever that whatever it was that had attacked the wallaby at the Hope Animal Sanctuary had any relationship with the 'creature' that had terrorised the peasant farmers of Puerto Rico. Still they asked me questions about my experiences with animal mutilation cases across the world and I did my best to answer to the best of my ability. It was interesting that even here, in a hotel dining room on the civilised and distinctly unfortunate north east coast of England, the paranoia about the forces that rule our lives, which seems to be getting ever more rampant amongst those whose lives are ruled, still managed to raise its ugly head. "*Could this killing be the result of secret Government biological tests?*" asked an attractive young girl called Becky. If she hadn't been young enough to be my daughter, I might well have wanted to continue our discussion in a more intimate location. "*No, of course not*", I said, explaining to a disappointed throng that whereas there is no doubt that the British Government know more about practically everything than they tell the general public, and doubtless carry out experiments on both animal and human subjects that the public know nothing about, there was no logic, rhyme or reason behind any theory that they would break into an animal sanctuary in the middle of the night in order to do so.

This level of paranoia exists across society and is one of the main strands in contemporary Fortean thinking. However whether dealing

with the contemporary urban rumour that "Everybody Knows" that Government agents roam around suburban council estates kidnapping cats for use in secret experiments, or the equally fallacious story that "Everybody Knows" that the Government is in league with malevolent aliens from Zeta Reticuli, my answer is the same. The (probably) fictitious Lazarus Long, who is one of my great heroes commented in *Time Enough For Love* (NEL, London, 1973), that "*when 'Everybody Knows' something to be a fact then the exact opposite is usually the case*".

Whether dealing with disappearing moggies or with dismembered marsupials, one has to take into account the fact that nobody, from the most insignificant bloke in the street to the most omnipotent New World Order wants to waste time or energy. In the same way as the fact that no-one, be they a fur trader or a sinister arm of the Government is going to kidnap moggies when every newsagent in the country offers litters of kittens for free, and they can be bred under the most insalubrious circumstances, no-one is gonna bother to break into somewhere to slaughter a wallaby in the name of science when they can be freely, and legally, bought over the Internet and through the small ads in the back pages of *Cage and Aviary Birds* for a reasonably insignificant sum. At the time of writing I believe that an albino wallaby (such as the one that we had come to the north to dissect) costs about £1,000 whereas ordinary coloured specimens are no more than £400 for a female and £150 (and sometimes considerably less) for a male.

I explained this to Becky and her chums, and was saddened, but not overly surprised, to see the disappointment writ large upon their faces. I am pretty sure they didn't believe me. At their age, with the confidence of youth, and their whole lives ahead of them, it is exciting to believe that you are part of a stalwart band

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standing fast against Government tyranny. Unfortunately none of us were.

After a few more questions, we decamped and loaded ourselves and our equipment into an impressive steel grey Battle Bus (in which the *Scream Team* were travelling around the country like a paramilitary version of the gang from *Scooby Doo*) and made our way down the twisty-turny coastal roads towards the small town of Loftus, and Clifford Spedding's Hope Animal Sanctuary.

When we arrived we could see that all our preconceptions about the place had been completely wrong.

RICHARD FREEMAN: The sanctuary spread for around an acre and consisted of home made enclosures constructed from sheds, ponds, paddocks and even an old caravan. The enclosures were well maintained and reasonably spacious. Inmates included stray dogs and cats, seagulls, a cormorant, polecats, wallabies, sheep and goats, rabbits and a llama.

The sanctuary was a very strange place. It had all the appearance of an animal sanctuary written and designed by the creators of the cult BBC TV series *The League of Gentlemen*.

The cages and enclosures looked as if they had been made out of lumber and old junk that had been pinched out of skips. The animals were in good condition and had obviously been looked after well, but the sanctuary was obviously home-made and desperately underfunded. There was a small gaggle of elderly women and the long-term unemployed who worked to keep the sanctuary going, and in the midst of them was the extraordinary character of Cliff Spedding, the owner and proprietor.

We had all been expecting that Cliff Spedding would turn out to be a respectable looking man in late middle age. We had all, I think, concocted a mental picture of him. He would be wearing a faded tweed jacket with leather patches on the elbows. He would smoke a pipe. He would possibly have a small moustache and his hair would be beginning to turn grey around his temples. Right?

Completely wrong!

Cliff Spedding was much younger than we had imagined him to be. He appeared to be in his late thirties, although he was actually 42. He had short cropped hair, dyed a dirty blonde, and a tiny dark tuft, looking for all the world like the tail of a ferret, on the back of his skull. He had several facial body piercings and was visibly overweight. It was hard not to argue with Richard's description of him as a middle aged, fat Eminem.

In the bus I had briefed the *Scream Team* about their mission. I cannot comment on the guest's experiences in the rest of the programmes in the series, but I *do* know from personal experience that the CFZ is the only organisation of its kind in the UK, and indeed the world. We work using scientific methodology and our own brand of detective work, and according to my interpretation of affairs, the *Scream Team* and the deputation from the CFZ were to work together in co-operation in order to solve the mystery. Much to my pleasure, the six "kids" from the *Scream Team* agreed with me and were happy to place themselves, temporarily, under my command and to carry out the investigation. I gave a list of tasks to the assembled "kids":

- To check the perimeter fence to ascertain how many entry points they could find.

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damage that could have been caused by the killer(s)

- To try and gain the confidence of the helpers at the sanctuary in order to find out something about the background of the proprietor and the sanctuary
- To ascertain whether the animals were kept in good condition
- To look for any implements left around the sanctuary that could have been used as a weapon to kill the unfortunate marsupial

The six members of the *Scream Team* seemed delighted to have been given their tasks, and one of them told me afterwards, that for the first time in the series they felt that they were *really* working together with professionals in order to solve a *real* case.

The TV Crew set up their cameras, Richard and I introduced ourselves to Cliff, and the six “kids” disappeared off to the far flung corners of the animal sanctuary to carry out the tasks that I had allotted to them.

Within about half-an-hour at the sanctuary several things became clear. There was no security whatsoever; the paddock could have been breached in any one of a dozen places. One of the team did find scratch marks on the perimeter fence, which did appear to show that someone might have climbed over some point. However these are not conclusive. They also found some tufts of hair, which may have belonged to the unfortunate wallaby, wedged into a niche in the fence. However, as there were still several wallabies in the paddock together with a number of pygmy goats, I did not feel that this was of any great importance.

A sweep with a Geiger counter revealed no abnormal radiation levels that are associated

Newquay in the 70s.

We then took the defrosted wallaby carcass to the Beck Veterinary Practice in Whitby. Here the highly helpful vet, Simon Beck had agreed to let us use his surgery. The first vet to whom the carcass had been entrusted had not got around to doing the post mortem so Simon and myself got to work on it. All six of the *Scream Team* (including a very squeamish and vegetarian Amy), squeezed into the small surgery together with the camera crew, sound, director, and producer.

The first thing that we found was that the initial story of the creature being completely exsanguinated was untrue. There was plenty of blood in the body. Secondly, accounts suggesting that the unfortunate creature had been decapitated by a single blow from an unknown sharp implement (the implication is always there that it was done by some hypothetical laser weapon from a psychopathic extra-terrestrial) were also untrue. Several blows had severed the head and right forearm.

The wound on the neck and forelimb was indicative of a blow from a heavy, sharp object such as a hatchet or machete. However, the unevenness of the initial wound suggested that it had not been a single clean cut. The trachea was neatly severed at one of the rings suggesting the head was yanked off after the initial blow. The blood vessels contained a lot of blood suggesting the animal was alive at the time the wounds were inflicted and had not been mutilated at a later time. The pelt was removed to facilitate examination of the subcutaneous flesh. A bruise was found at the base of the spine indicating that a blow was dealt there, perhaps to incapacitate the animal.

Autopsy report: Wallaby

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Autopsy carried out on 22.8.2002 by Simon Beck and Richard Freeman

The act of decapitation was carried out with a sharp weapon such as a hatchet or cleaver. The edges to the cut are uneven, and the bones were smashed, suggesting that several blows, (3+) were used.

The trachea is severed at one of the rings suggesting that after the spinal column was severed the head was pulled away from the body.

The absence of blood on the pelt of the albino animal suggests that one of the people responsible for the killing held a bag over the animals head, into which the head and right fore arm (paw) fell after the decapitation. The jugular vein and aorta etc would have spurted blood into the bag rather than onto the pelt or the ground. (The testimony of Mr Spedding suggests that there was very little blood on the ground when the body was found).

Removal of the pelt showed bruising at the base of the spine indicative of a blow from a club like object. (Possibly a baseball bat). The pattern of bruising suggests that the object was rounded. This would seem to have been what knocked the animal to the floor before the blow to the neck was made.

Examination of the organs showed that they were full of blood. The heart and lungs were both healthy though engorged with blood suggesting that the animal was struggling and agitated at the time of death. This shows the animal was alive when the wounds were inflicted and the carcass was not mutilated after death.

The wounds to the neck and shoulder are indicative that the wounds were made at the time of death or VERY SHORTLY AFTERWARDS. The logical inference is that the decapitation was, indeed, the cause of death.

Examination of the stomach contents, gut, and intestines failed to reveal any signs of drugs either in the form of undigested pills or semi-digested Cannabis sativa plants. It is a matter of record that wallabies do enjoy eating young shoots of C.sativa and we briefly considered whether the animal could have been 'doped' by this method before death.

Examination of the interior of the lungs found no trace of chemicals, suggesting that the creature had not been subdued by chemical means. As the lungs of so-called "cattle mutilation syndrome" victims are sometimes claimed to have been polluted by ammonia/coal tar it is useful to note that nothing of the kind was found in this case.

The pouch was intact and the animal was neither pregnant nor nursing when killed.

An examination of the anus and vagina suggests that there was no sexual motive for the killings, although chemical reagent tests for semen were not carried out.

We concluded that a gang of several people (three or more) were involved. They were well organized and not drunk or under the influence of drugs. There was no indication of occult practices in the killing. The killing seemed to be a deliberate act of malice by person or persons unknown.

Jon Downes,
CFZ 2002-08-26

The conclusion that we reached was that a gang of several men had killed the animal by cornering it, striking it at the base of the spine and then holding it down whilst the fatal blow was dealt.

It is likely that the body was held up by the tail and the blood caught in a bag. The head and

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forepaw were never found. There was no evidence of occult or ritualistic activity and the men who did this were not drunk or on drugs. The killing was carried out with some degree of co-ordination. It seemed that the killing was a deliberate act of malice with someone who had a grudge against Cliff Spedding.

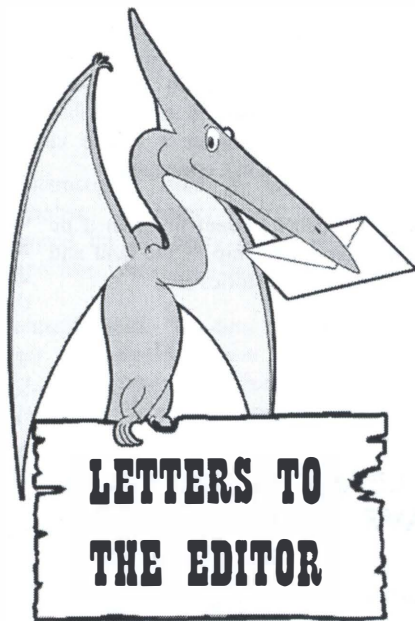
The following day we reported to PC O'Hara and told him of our findings and showed him the photographs of the post mortem. He agreed with our theories of the gang with a grudge. He and WPC Rachel Dick told us that they thought it was an out of town group who were responsible as the local thugs would have soon been exposed by gossip in the small community. Despite some sidesplitting stories of inbreeding and bestiality in nearby Skinningrove they had never come across devil worship.

The next day we took a look at the woods in Loftus. Unless empty beer cans and not so empty condoms are artifacts of the great beast then there was no evidence of unclean rites wherein naked acolytes prance 'neath the gibbous moon whilst daubing themselves in wallaby blood.

If the intervention of the CFZ on the side of the forces of law and order has helped the police in their attempts at catching the killers then we will have done a good day's work.

Although it seems that in this instance the motivation of the killers was malicious, studies in the United States have proven that a significant number of serial killers and serial sex abusers started off their careers ill-treating and killing animals.

We therefore believe that our expertise in profiling perpetrators of animal mutilations is of very real social importance.



The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

H TO H-E WHO AM THE ONLY ONE

Dear Jon,

The manner in which my article on the *Dobhar Chu* was published in your Yearbook was fantastic! It was very satisfying to finally see my own work in print. I can't be very busy with work, but I have completed the first draft of my next paper on the elusive Irish wildcat, and hope to have it finished within the next couple of

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months. I will also keep you informed of any developments with regard to the unpublished manuscript of Lionel Leslie on Irish lake monsters. Also with regard to the possible remains of a horse eel under a bridge at Loughs Colar / Derrylea in Connemara.

I have asked Clifden's present librarian if he can enquire about ownership of the land and also local memories and stories etc.

Best wishes

Gary Cunningham
Northern Ireland.

THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS WAVE TO EACH OTHER

Dear Jonathan,

Many thanks for your kind Christmas card and the Annual Report. Clearly you are making good progress. But don't worry if it takes ages for the charitable status to get finalised. I have registered a number of charities in the past... it seems to take longer each time. A year is pretty usual.

The expedition to Guyana went well - a report is enclosed. Whilst there I learned of several reports of a creature which sounds like *Ameranthropoides loysii*. Booming calls are reported by Indians who swear that this is not a howler monkey. The area is remote and is also supposed to be the site of a meteor impact in the 1930s. Indians talk of "the night the sky came down". I am considering an expedition to the area in October next year.

Every good wish towards the CFZ,

John Blashford-Snell,
Dorset.

A PLAGUE OF LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS

Dear Editor,

What's with the new caring face of the Ed in the frontispiece? What became of the slaverling demi-god of rock, front man of the *Exe Pistols*, famed for plunging his strat into a Marshall's diaphragm? Of course we weren't a charity then...

Although of a retiring nature I feel compelled to comment on the Watford missive. The biggest 'tragedy to befall the editor' is this pedant having access to a Biro. Since when was the Herts. natural history society mainstream?

Come back Clinton Keeling all is forgiven!

Wels catfish et al.

Don't believe anything a fisherman writes as they are all maritally challenged, hence the nocturnal pastime of fondling worms. They are all born liars, prone to gross exaggeration and desperate for public acclaim.

I know - I WAS that fisherman.

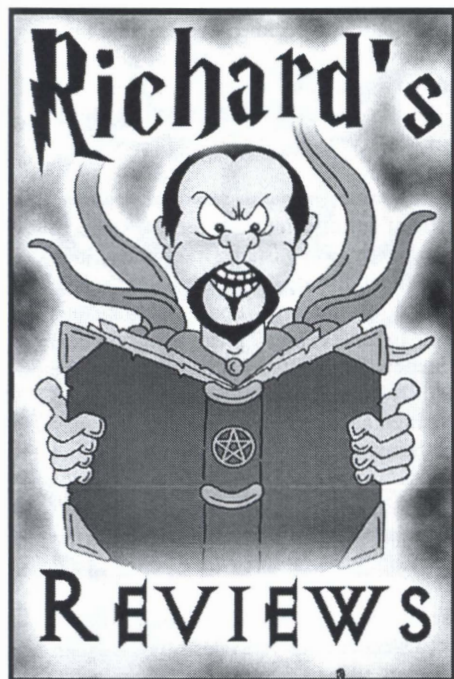
#28 was head and shoulders above its recent predecessors, the first half of which came over as a list of stuff lifted off various websites. Much better now.

Suggestions for future issues:

How about an in-depth interview with Debbie Martyr about spending all that time tracking the Orang Pendek with her knickers full of ants only to be upstaged by three part-time Geordies?

Tom Anderson
Aberdeen.

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books

The Field Guide to North American Monsters by W Haden Blackman
(Three Rivers Press
ISBN 0-609-80017-5)

This book was never released on this side of the pond and all I can say is thank god for that. I was expecting an interesting and entertaining book along the lines of Loren Coleman's *Mysterious America*.

What I found however makes Daniel Cohen's worthless *Encyclopedia of Monsters* look like *On the Track of Unknown Animals*. Blackman's book mixes ghosts, Indian spirits, and modern day bogie men with cryptids.

Worse than this is the total lack of knowledge with which he writes. He attributes size, weight, and exact population. How does he know this? The answer is simple, he doesn't. He makes the whole thing up and arbitrarily gives out "facts" and "figures" from his own imagination.

For example we are told that there is one monster in Flathead Lake. It is an omnivore 30 feet long and weighs two tons. If this was pure speculation and Blackman said so it would not be so bad. But he portrays his wild estimates as if they were fact and he was an authority.

He also includes such unlikely beasts as 100-foot alligators and sharks, UFO entities and the Mafara lights. The book is a waste of ink and paper. Avoid it like the plague.

The New Zoo by Dr Karl Shuker
(House of Stratus ISBN 1-84232-561-2)

Remember Karl Shuker and his *Lost Ark*? Well he's back, and this time he's got a *New Zoo*! *The Lost Ark* was always my favorite of Karl's books, and also the one I refer to most for research. Now, the jewel in Dr Shuker's crown has had a timely makeover and reprint. The title *New Zoo* is not as evocative as the *Lost Ark* but the book is just as good and has more colour pictures than its predecessor.

Nature has not stood still in the decade since *The Lost Ark* was published and a whole cart load of new animals are listed including such delights as the dwarf tree porcupine and the Hanoi giant turtle. One excellent peice of news is that the Queimada Grande viper or golden lance head, that was feared extinct has been rediscovered and seems to be doing well.

Only a base poltroon would not include *The New Zoo* in their book collection.

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Tiger Tales: Stories of the Tasmanian Tiger by Col Baily (Harper Collins ISBN0 7322 6925 3)

Col Baily writes a column on thylacines for the Derwent Valley Gazette. This book is a collection of his work. It includes sightings of thylacines from the early part of the last century right up until the present day. Col has been writing and researching for years and many of his testimonies come from old trappers, fossickers, and prospectors now dead. These folks had encounters with thylacines in the wild and if it were not for Col's collecting these stories would have been lost.

The book is liberally illustrated with photographs of captive thylacines and thylacine habitats. Many of them have not been reproduced before.

Col himself knows the beast is still in existence as he saw one with his own eyes in Coorong, south-eastern Australia. He now spends many hours searching the Tasmanian bush. I hope he manages to get a photograph of a tazzie wolf, he certainly deserves to!

Dodo: From Extinction to Icon
Errol Fuller (Harper Collins ISBN 0 00 714572 1)

From an officially extinct species that is almost certainly still around to one that most certainly is not.

What is amazing about this book is that it shows us how little we really know about the dodo and how much we assume. The bird's habits and appearance are recorded in a scant 16 writings from the period. Most are by sailors rather than scientists. It appears that only one live specimen ever made it to Europe

and only one stuffed specimen ever existed (and that was thrown out!). All subsequent paintings and illustrations have been based on these. All we have left of one of the most remarkable birds to have ever lived are a few bones and a preserved head.

This dearth of information has caused some to extrapolate wildly. For instance the white dodo of Reunion inland, long believed to be a race closely allied to the grey dodo of Mauritius seems never to have existed. There is a good deal more evidence for most cryptids than for the white dodo. No bones have ever been found and the four written accounts give little detail. It may have been based on glimpses of the now extinct Reunion ibis.

The book also details the extinction of the Solitaire of Rodrigues.

This close relation of the dodo, (looking like a long necked slender dodo) was destroyed by man about 100 years after its more famous relative.

It seems that the dodo had a restricted range even before man arrived. They were reported from one stretch of shore and a small island close to this area.

The dodo may have been extinct well before the official date of its demise in 1681. Later reports seem to have been of the now equally extinct Mauritius red rail.

The dodo has made a comeback in spirit if not in body. Since it featured in Alice in Wonderland the bird has seized the public's imagination. Now there are dodo toys, dodo ornaments, dodo books, and dodo sweets.

Dodos have been used to advertise almost any product you can think of (usually as loveable icons of extinction). As the old song says... "you don't know what you've got till it's gone."

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Magazines

We welcome an exchange with publications, which cover subjects of mutual interest. Because of lack of space we can only mention publications, which we have *received* during the last three months.

British Columbia Scientific Cryptozoology Club,
3773 West 18th Avenue, Vancouver,
B C, V6S 1B3, Canada
An interesting newsletter, which contains news, expedition reports and much of interest from this fine society.

'DEAD OF NIGHT', 156 Bolton Road
East, New Ferry, Merseyside, L62 4RY
For years this has been our favourite paranormal publication. Though home made and photocopied it has a breadth of subject and high standards of writing that would put many professional publications to shame.

TEMS News, 115 Hollybush Lane,
Hampton, Middx, TW12 8QY
Lionel Beer publishes this newsletter of the Travel and Earth Mysteries Society. It is an amusing, and often fascinating miscellany of quasi fortune odds and sods and is highly recommended.

'Fortean Times', Box 2409,
LONDON, NW5 4NP
One American magazine once described FT as the 'Granddaddy' of Fortean Publications. Whilst nitpickers would probably say that this honour should really go to *Fate* (published for over fifty years) or *Psychic News* (considerably longer), FT is now thirty years old. Good luck to Dave Sutton the new Editor.

Essex Reptiles & Amphibians Society
Mrs V Clark, 6 Chestnut
Way, Tiptree, Colchester, Essex, CO5
ONX
The hobby of reptile keeping is becoming increasingly beleaguered these days. People, like the CFZ who have a collection of exotic reptiles are

being pictured as inhuman monsters and it looks likely that the pastime will soon be forced into extinction. In this current political climate it is comforting to find a magazine like this which dispenses news, hints, veterinary advice and society information with humour and style.

Porcupine!,
Dept of Ecology & Biodiversity,
University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam
Road, Hong Kong
This, the journal of the Hong Kong and South China Biodiversity and Ecology survey has much of interest to the fortan zoologist as well as the conservationist. As noted before in these pages, Hong Kong is a valuable living laboratory and scarcely an issue of this magazine comes out without including some item of interest to members of the CFZ.

Eye
24 Chesnut Ave, Queens Road, Hull,
HU5 2RH
Although still in its early days this magazine of the new Ufology looks likely to be amongst the leading publications of its type in the UK

Project Red Book
224, Bellhouse Rd, Firth Park,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S5 6HT
This is one of the few *monthly* mags that we know of that are privately published and funded. Covering UFOlogy with élan and flair and often from the Keelian viewpoint we cannot praise this periodical highly enough

Animal News
3a Aspley Hill, Woburn Sands, Milton
Keynes, Bucks. MK17 8NH
This is the journal of the National Association of Private Animal Keepers (NAPAK). We have supported them in their aims for many years, and have occasionally received their newsletter. Frankly, it was not up to much though the aims of the association are worthy ones. In the past six months, however the journal has blossomed into the best magazine on animal husbandry that we have ever read.

We cannot praise this highly enough and urge everyone even slightly interested in the subject to subscribe.

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Deep in a cave beneath Loch Ness lives a strange figure who steals ideas from other magazines and then somehow makes them his own.

He keeps a jaundiced weather eye on the world of Fortean Zoology and occasionally emerges into the world of men to pour ridicule upon his unsuspecting victims...

The CFZ's version of the Bill Grundy Show?

Who on earth had the bright idea of inviting Richard and Jon to appear on the trendy BBC 2 show *Diners?* It was asking for trouble. OK, on paper, give two *bon vivants* like the cuddly twosome from the CFZ, some nice food, some good booze, and a pleasant

ambience and they would talk entertainingly all night.

However, mess them around for ages, give them a menu, which despite hours of prior consultation contained practically nothing that Richard wasn't allergic to, and the rest of which was inedible, and provide an expensive bottle of *chenin blanc* which tasted like paintstripper and you have a recipe for disaster.

On top of that add an intrusive researcher demanding to know intimate details of Jon's divorce and Richard's sexual proclivities and it is actually quite surprising that our two heroes weren't even more obstreperous.

In the end the BBC got off lightly, we think, with a couple of hours of surreal ramblings and anti BBC rants before the world's two leading fortran zoologists walked out in disgust.

What a waste of the license fee.

Animals & Men #29

We're Gonna Ice the Mutha....

As the CFZ were preparing for their recent foray to Northumberland, they ran into considerable opposition from certain factions within Northumberland Borough Council who did all they could to dissuade them, short of banning the expedition outright, for fear that the CFZ and their attendant cohorts were likely to "*disrupt the smooth running of the park*". At the beginning of the planning process, the CFZ were fairly convinced that the whole affair was a hoax and made contingency plans for what they would do if confronted by a scion of the tabloid newspapers dressed in a monkey suit.



These contingency plans involved splattering the hoaxer with a paintball gun. Also, because of the extreme weather conditions, they purchased balaclavas, purely to keep their ears warm! It is probably a good thing that the Northumberland Borough Council didn't get

hold of this publicity photograph featuring Messrs Freeman and Fuller modelling their cold weather gear and paintball guns. In the current political climate it would probably have led to Dubya sending arms inspectors into the CFZ HQ preparatory to launching an all out military offensive. Coincidentally, Messrs Fuller and Freeman have denied all rumours and allegations that they were considering a career change to become postal workers!

Now't as queer as folk....

The Fortean Universe is a particularly weird place. OK, I suppose that is an obvious statement to make, considering that the whole study of forteana is in essence the pursuit of the weird. However after years in this peculiar environment I have come to the conclusion that the weirdest thing about the fortean universe is the forteans themselves.

Three or four years ago an author, who shall remain nameless, was paid a £200,000 advance for a book alleging that aliens live at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean and that we are in constant danger from infiltration by Claymen from the 7th Density (or some other twaddle). People either ignored this twaddle or believed it. Whichever stance they took, the publication of this book (and the small fortune paid for it), passed without much comment.

On their return from Northumberland the CFZ announced that IN THEIR OPINION the creature which they had been investigating was not a carbon-based flesh and blood life-form. Jon was immediately crucified in several Internet newsgroups for this suggestion, and one bigfoot newsgroup (which shall remain nameless), immediately banned anyone who agreed with him!

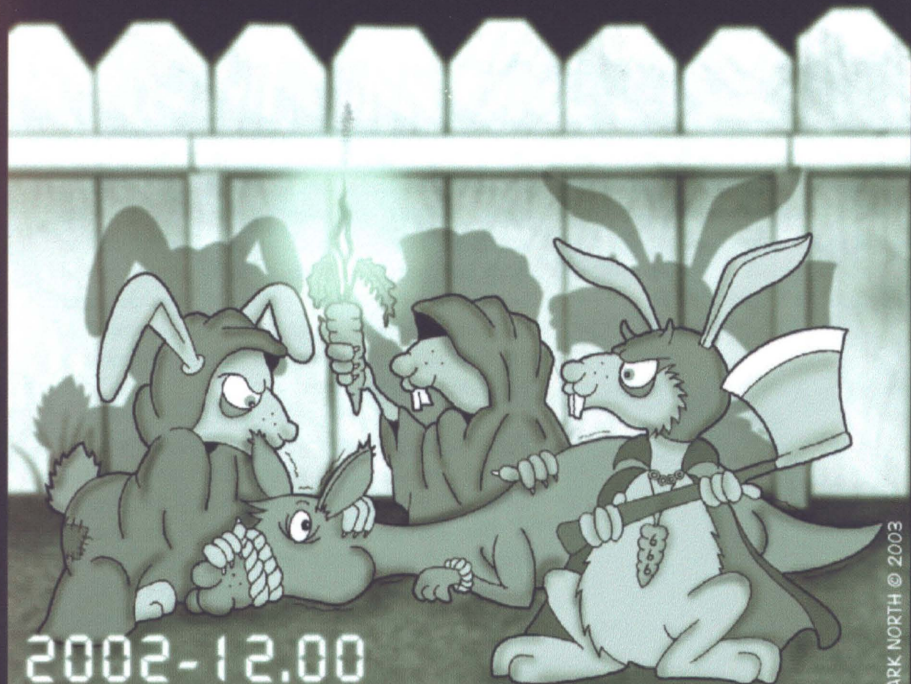
Double standards or what?

THE

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RYPTOZOOLOGY FILES

BY MARK NORTH



2002-12.00

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LOCATION:
LOFTUS, CLEVELAND,
U.K.

CASE:
ANIMAL MUTILATION.

AFTER A SPATE OF ANIMAL MUTILATIONS AT THE HOPE ANIMAL SANCTUARY. THE RECENT INSTALLED CCTV CAMERA REVEALED SOME SHOCKING AND SINISTER REVELATIONS ABOUT THE SANCTUARY'S RESCUED RABBIT'S MIDNIGHT ACTIVITIES.